

5 cents

November 1950

The American Mercury

ADMIRAL FORREST P. SHERMAN

William Hines

TRACK (a reprint)

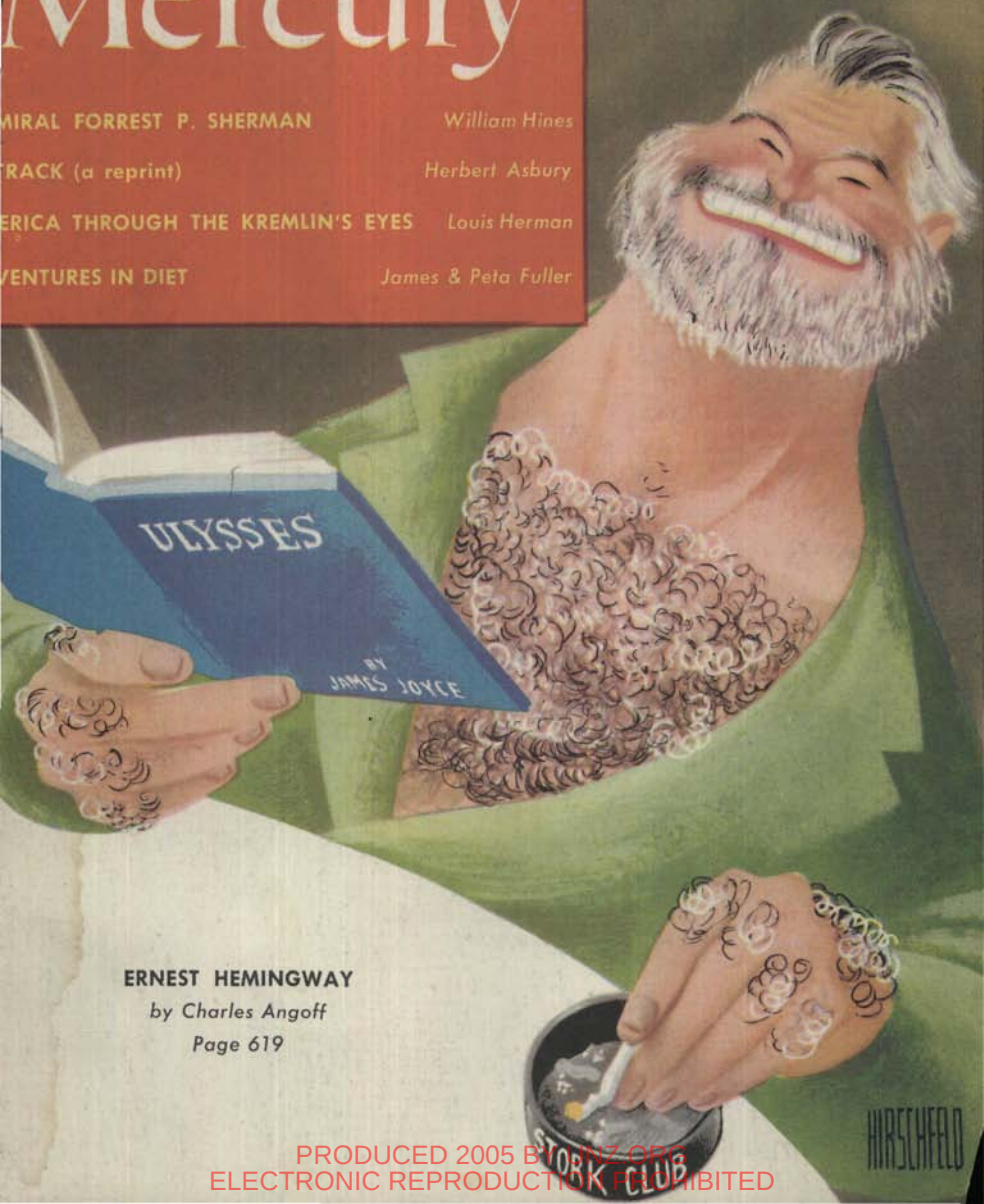
Herbert Asbury

ERICA THROUGH THE KREMLIN'S EYES

Louis Herman

VENTURES IN DIET

James & Peta Fuller



ERNEST HEMINGWAY

by Charles Angoff

Page 619

PRODUCED 2005 BY BIZ ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

HIRSCHFELD



JOHN DICKSON CARR, famous mystery writer. "What I look for is not a clumsy concoction of boy-meets-girl-with-detective-incidents, but a detective story with an original idea. That's what I find in every issue of **ELLERY QUEEN'S MYSTERY MAGAZINE**. That's why I think EQMM is the best detective magazine in the business."



HAZEL SCOTT, noted concert pianist and jazz improviser. "During the concert season when I am constantly under pressure, **ELLERY QUEEN'S MYSTERY MAGAZINE** is an abiding pleasure—offering release from tension and affording rare stimulation. I wouldn't be without it!"



LAURITZ MELCHIOR, heroic tenor of the Metropolitan Opera Company. "**ELLERY QUEEN'S MYSTERY MAGAZINE** is a really fine collection of stimulating tales. After a strenuous evening at the Metropolitan, or a day of shooting on the movie lot, I find real relaxation in reading a story or two in your magazine. I am all for it."



CHRISTOPHER MORLEY, critic and author. "**ELLERY QUEEN'S MYSTERY MAGAZINE** has both the good bread of the run-of-the-guillotine crime tales and **ALSO** what a gift he has for rummaging out the honeys—those rare oddities that are vintage and not varicose. In short E.Q. has I.Q."



HELENE TRAUBEL, world's greatest Wagnerian soprano: "After a strenuous opera performance or concert, I find much needed relaxation in reading **ELLERY QUEEN'S MYSTERY MAGAZINE**."



JAMES HILTON, renowned author of "So Well Remembered" and "Lost Horizon." "I have seen and enjoyed many copies of **ELLERY QUEEN'S MYSTERY MAGAZINE**. It seems to me just about the best form of 'escapism'."

Whoever heard such talk from such people about a mystery magazine?

Never has any mystery magazine been so applauded by such distinguished applauders. "Never" is a big word—but Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine is a big departure from all the usual kinds of magazine. It gives you not only the best short stories by leading detective-story writers, but also little-known crime classics by the literary great in other fields.

Thus you get mysteries by Somerset Maugham, Christopher Morley, Mark Twain, H. G. Wells and Theodore Dreiser, as well as by the acknowledged masters of the mystery field—Dashiell Hammett, Agatha Christie, John Dickson Carr, Cornell Woolrich, Dorothy L. Sayers and many others.

WATCH FOR ELLERY QUEEN ON TV

In addition to the distinguished applauders pictured here, EQMM has received orchids from such notables as Arch Oboler, Helen Jepson, Efrem Kurtz, Rex Stout, Edward L. Bernays, James M. Cain, Elsa Maxwell, Joseph Henry Jackson, and many others!

35¢ At your newsstand EVERY MONTH



By Subscription \$4 a year

ELLERY QUEEN'S MYSTERY MAGAZINE

PRODUCED BY J. SPYGLAS, Publisher

ELLERY QUEEN, Editor

570 LEXINGTON AVENUE, NEW YORK 22, N. Y.

The American Mercury

with which is combined the magazine, COMMON SENSE

VOLUME LXXI

NOVEMBER 1950

NUMBER 323

Admiral Sherman: Chief of Naval Operations	William Hines	515
The New Soviet Man	Ada Siegel	524
The Great Unlearning	Abraham Myerson, M.D.	533
<i>Phrase Origins — 70</i>	Morris Rosenblum	537
The History of Some "Dirty" Words	Falk Johnson	538
THE THEATRE: More Autobiographical Notes	George Jean Nathan	546
Redbird Blues, <i>A Poem</i>	Vincent McHugh	551
Moonshining Is on the Rampage	Irwin Ross	552
The Near Patch, <i>A Poem</i>	Sophie Himmell	558
The Butcherbirds, <i>A Story</i>	Esther Patt	559
Hatrack	Herbert Asbury	567
Adventures in Diet	James & Peta Fuller	574
Big Red Schoolhouses	Sam Shulsky	583
Signatures, <i>A Poem</i>	Candace T. Stevenson	589
America through the Kremlin's Eyes	Louis Jay Herman	590
Franklin Pierce: The Reluctant President	Wenzell Brown	598
DOWN TO EARTH: The Sextons	Alan Devoe	608
Tank Town, <i>A Poem</i>	Leslie Nelson Jennings	612
Winnipeg: Portrait of a Boom Town	Stewart H. Holbrook	613
The Old and the Old, <i>A Poem</i>	Joseph Joel Keith	618
THE LIBRARY: Ernest Hemingway	Charles Angoff	619
THE CHECK LIST		626
THE OPEN FORUM		631
COVER (<i>Ernest Hemingway</i>) by Al Hirschfeld		
DEPARTMENTAL DRAWINGS by Bertrand Zadig		

Published monthly by Mercury Publications, Inc., at 35 cents a copy. Annual subscription \$4.00 in U. S. and possessions, Canada and in the countries of the Pan American Union; \$5.00 in all other countries. Publication office: Concord, N. H. Editorial and General offices, 570 Lexington Avenue, New York 22, N. Y. Printed in the U. S. A. Entered as second-class matter at the post office at Concord, N. H., September 29, 1936, under the Act of March 3, 1879. Copyright 1950 by Mercury Publications, Inc. All rights, including translation into other languages, reserved. Protection secured under the International Copyright Convention and the Pan American Copyright Convention. No articles may be reprinted in whole or part without permission.

Lawrence E. Spivak, *Editor & Publisher*

Charles Angoff, *Managing Editor*

George Salter, *Art Director*; Martha Rountree, *Roaming Editor*

Joseph W. Ferman, *General Manager*

THERE'S A NEW MERCURY COMING!

Here's important news for *AMERICAN MERCURY* readers. Starting with the next issue the *MERCURY* will have new owners—a new Publisher, a new Editor, a new editorial program . . . and a new look.

- The new Publisher is Clendenin J. Ryan, the young political crusader . . . who was a Navy officer in the Second War . . . and who is a grandson of the great Virginia financier and Southern Democrat, Thomas Fortune Ryan.
- The new Editor is William Bradford Huie, the Alabama-born author of controversial books and articles . . . who is perhaps the most provocative young writer and lecturer in America. Mr. Huie, also, was a Navy officer in the Second War.
- The new magazine will be, primarily, by and for the war generation of Americans . . . the Roosevelt generation . . . the generation which is now the responsible generation. It will be a politico-literary magazine in the Mencken tradition . . . a vigorous, intelligent journal of opinion which will attract, present, and develop the ablest young thinkers and writers of the world.

The *NEW AMERICAN MERCURY* makes its first appearance on newsstands November 21st. Watch for it! Read it! Criticize it!

THE NEW AMERICAN MERCURY

32 East 57th Street • New York 22, N. Y.

The American Mercury

ADMIRAL SHERMAN: CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS

BY

WILLIAM HINES

HAD Lieutenant William Bligh strode into the forecabin of H.M.S. *Bounty* on the eve of the famous mutiny, he could not have received a frostier welcome than the one which Admiral Forrest Percival Sherman received when he took over last fall as Chief of Naval Operations. Yet today, after less than one year of Sherman's leadership, the Navy fully accepts him as boss—and what is more, that hard-shelled branch of the service is more happily shipshape

than it has been at any time since the end of World War II.

This rapid and fortunate change might seem to reveal in Sherman a rare warmth, a great outgoing personality, a rare ability to instill in his subordinates an undying personal devotion. But if Sherman is friendly enough with people he knows well, he has a manner in normal intercourse that would give chilblains to an iceberg. His success in unifying the Navy within itself, in bringing the Navy

WILLIAM HINES' most recent profile for the *MERCURY*, "General Collins: Army Chief of Staff," appeared in September. He was formerly Assistant Chief of News in the Department of the Army, and is now on the staff of the *Washington Evening Star*.

closer to real unification with the other armed forces, has stemmed instead from the use of just one highly-tuned precision instrument: his brain. By any standard, he is the mental leader, rather than the physical one; his capacity for productive cerebration is unequalled in the Government today, and probably unparalleled in the Navy's history. He is not a man carrying a brain around, he is a brain using a man's body for transportation.

Sherman's presence in the CNO's office on the fourth deck — not floor — of the "Mall" side of the Pentagon lends authenticity to such old saws as "every cloud has a silver lining" and "it's a long lane that has no turning." His oath-taking on November 3, 1949, was the happy climax to an otherwise dingy tale of Pentagon politics put in motion by Louis Johnson and brought to culmination by the fracas between John Crommelin and Francis P. Matthews. The appointment of Sherman, or someone like him, as CNO — and the chill reception the new man would receive — became inevitable the day the U.S.S. *United States* was scuttled. The abortion of the big Navy baby in the shipbuilding yards at Norfolk caused the resignation of scrappy John L. Sullivan as Secretary of the Navy.

Sullivan was a civilian, and as such was not too well-loved by the Braid. But since he had, in effect, been

bounced for fighting their battle for them, most of the Pentagon-based admirals viewed dimly the appointment of his successor, Francis P. Matthews, whom they considered a Charlie McCarthy for the unpopular Secretary of Defense. There was little, in truth, that was auspicious about Matthews' appointment. He had no Navy connections or naval knowledge. He came from Omaha, Nebr., which is just about as far from salt water as one can get in the United States. He was a figure of no great political stature and no national reputation: a wire-service Pentagon correspondent dug deep into his bag of labels in an effort to identify Matthews adequately, and came up with "prominent Catholic layman." And for the first few months of his tenure, Matthews' performance was about as undistinguished as many had expected and as vocal Navy men had predicted. The reason was simple: he was being sabotaged.

Matthews, who is at least as honest as the next member of the Truman Administration and a good bit shrewder than the Navy once estimated, was doing his best. But the record seems to indicate that his best was none too good, largely because of personal ignorance of naval affairs and an inability to obtain sincere counsel from Denfeld and several other top Navy Department admirals.

Matthews gradually felt that he was being preyed on by spies and saboteurs. He knew his mail was being read and he had misgivings about the sanctity of his private office from the mischiefs of wire-tappers and microphone installers. Certainly he was a lonely man. Admirals came and went around Washington without bothering to pay him the basic courtesy of leaving cards at his office.

Then hell broke loose. A House committee received an anonymous letter charging venality in connection with the development of the B-36. The note touched off the bitter B-36 inquiry, which turned up a Navy press agent as the author of the letter, and made public the hard feelings and harder words — “billion-dollar blunder” and “fancy dans” — that had been flying around the Pentagon for months. It became known, too, that John Crommelin had been circulating confidential material to newspapermen. Through it all, bumbling, good-natured old Louis Denfeld rambled like Ferdinand the Bull, gazing benignly in all directions, smelling the flowers and exuding a happy aroma of salt water and bewilderment.

While this monumental tussle was going on, Fleet Admiral Chester Nimitz, a former CNO who had employed Sherman on two occasions as his principal assistant, dropped into Washington one day on United Na-

tions business. A meticulous man, he went to the Pentagon to pay his respects to the Secretary of the Navy, whom he had never met. In the course of their meeting, Matthews let his hair down and told Nimitz he was looking for a replacement for Denfeld. Suggestions having been solicited, Nimitz mentioned Sherman, who was at the time commander of the Navy's Sixth Fleet in the Mediterranean.

It was Nimitz' thesis that the Navy, if it had not actually gone to hell in recent years, had at least undergone a change in mores: the proportion of men of honor, selflessness and devotion in the Navy, Nimitz held, had decreased sharply. Sherman, the white-haired Texan contended, was one of the few left. On the other side of the fence, Denfeld had told associates on several occasions that he considered Sherman to be ambitious and politically dangerous; in short, a smoothie. At least once, Denfeld pointedly refused to consider Sherman as Vice Chief of Naval Operations.

But at Matthews' order, Sherman was smuggled into the United States from the Mediterranean for an overnight conference with the Secretary just as the Navy's part in the B-36 investigation was getting under way. This trip is not to be confused with the later, more publicized “secret”

flight of late October, when Sherman went to Washington "like a thief in the night," as one Navy officer expressed it, to become CNO.

II

The first meeting of Matthews and Sherman was a "get-acquainted" visit. Matthews says he did not mention the office of CNO to Sherman, but the perceptive admiral must have known what was in the wind. But Matthews was interested in avoiding any rash promises while the Congressional inquiry was going on; he knew that Sherman might be summoned to testify as one of the authors of the unification bill, and he also knew that less than two years before unification became law, Sherman had been one of its most vocal opponents. What he might say before a House committee would be anyone's guess; if he backed unification and was forced to admit that he had been promised the CNO job, his usefulness to Matthews would be destroyed. On the other hand, if he supported the Radford anti-unification admirals, and had been promised the CNO post, he would be equally useless to Matthews.

At any rate, Sherman got out of town without testifying. Then, on Navy Day, October 27, Denfeld got his walking papers, and although the admiral was bounced by Matthews, most Navy officers placed the blame

on Louis Johnson. The Navy's bitterness toward Johnson boiled over. One sea-dog muttered, long after the deed was done, "The son-of-a-bitch couldn't just kick Denfeld out, he had to do it on Navy Day!" It was this rather general feeling that the Navy had been slapped, more than any great personal devotion to Denfeld, that brought about the spontaneous farewell accorded to the old CNO.

Into a near-mutinous atmosphere, then, came Sherman, smeared by association with the tar-brush of Louis Johnsonism. Even many of his friends figured Sherman's ambition had caused him to sell out himself and his Navy for a strip of gold braid, and looked on him as another Charlie McCarthy for Johnson. If he had been appointed for such a rôle — and there is no evidence that Johnson had more than a passive part in calling Sherman to Washington — Sherman would have disappointed his sponsor. All the evidence suggests that Sherman was selected because the Navy was getting nowhere fast trying to buck unification. Matthews needed an admiral whose attitude would be a little more old-fashioned; a man who could say, as Sherman did later at Annapolis —

Differences in professional opinion are to be expected, and with the strong characters required in military leaders, sharp conflicts are apt to occur. Adequate presentation of such opinions is

healthy if kept within proper bounds, but never forget that we are all striving for a common goal — the preservation of our country, our freedom and our national way of life. When our beliefs and professional advice have been adequately presented — on any level of command or responsibility — it is then our duty to carry out the decisions of our superiors without equivocation or evasion. This is particularly necessary in the case of decisions by the civil authorities in whom the ultimate responsibility rests.

It was this remark, and others in Sherman's address only a month after he took over as CNO, that started a pro-Sherman trend in the Navy Department. What he was advocating was not high treason against the Green Bowl Society or the spirit of Tecumseh; it was a timeless military tenet: while the discussion is still open, make known your views; when the decision is made by your boss, follow it undeviatingly, carry out your assignment with vigor and honor.

The ship, which had heretofore been listing to port with anti-Sherman sentiment, righted itself almost completely when the CNO was invited to speak at a Press Club luncheon. One reporter who covered the Pentagon recalls that event:

We had Sherman figured for a regular Louis Johnson-type bastard, and decided to work him over. During the

questioning period, someone asked, "What are you going to do about John Crommelin?" Sherman thought for a minute. Then he said, "Well, John Crommelin and I both had to swim away from our carriers. There is no question in my mind that John Crommelin's service has been of inestimable value to the country, and I am sure he can be of even greater service in the future."

What Sherman had said sounded to us like a pretty fair-minded statement. We began to figure him a little differently.

At the Pentagon, too, the Press Club reply was well received. The Navy knew that Sherman had implied an unspoken proviso in his answer: Crommelin could be of great service in the future if he would only keep his mouth shut. In other words, if Crommelin were to become a martyr, he would have to engineer his own martyrdom. To the Navy, the Sherman answer made good sense.

Sherman's answers usually do make good sense, and reveal both thought and planning. Planning, in fact, took him into Annapolis from his New Hampshire home in 1914, when he was less than eighteen but already in love with the sea. And planning brought him out of Annapolis in 1917, second man in his class — a wartime expedient had caused the class of '18 to be graduated a year

early. Doping out his future, he planned his way into naval aviation and was a member of the first group of fliers trained on the U.S.S. *Langley*. He planned his way, later, into staff work and did much of the Navy's thinking in the latter half of the recent Pacific war.

His old associates remember him as a man who always had a plan. Captain Courtney Shands, who commanded a fighter unit aboard Sherman's aircraft carrier *Wasp* early in the war, recalls the dying moments of that ship:

When Japanese torpedoes got the *Wasp*, Sherman was ready to abandon ship with a minimum of casualties. He had always figured this might happen — though it never seemed to worry him much — and he had taken into consideration possible wind, weather and sea conditions. There was something methodical about the way he handled the disaster. It was as though he had filed away a Plan "A," a Plan "B" and so on down to Plan "Z" and, at the crucial moment, implemented the proper plan.

Another instance of Sherman's exceptional foresight was noted at Manila by Colonel Sidney Mashbir, MacArthur's chief Japanese language translator. Sherman, then a rear admiral and Nimitz' principal plans officer, had gone from Pearl Harbor to Manila to take part in the Japanese

surrender negotiations in August 1945. After a general meeting among the allied and enemy officials, a number of smaller conferences were held, the allied artillery officer negotiating with his Japanese opposite number on the surrender of artillery, etc. Sherman represented the Navy.

Mashbir recalls that of all the meetings Sherman's was perhaps the most complex, yet it was one of the first meetings concluded, and his report one of the first to be made. "He had a series of questions mapped out," Mashbir explains. "He asked the questions in order, and noted the answers. Then, instead of writing a report, he dictated one. His question-and-answer minutes of the meeting constituted, with his recommendations, his report to Nimitz."

It can be taken for granted that Sherman's queries were short and penetrating, while the Japanese officials' replies were detailed and informative, for Sherman is the farthest thing in the world from a pop-off. He is rumored to be the least heard and most listened-to member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. He is also the junior member, competing against such veteran cause-pleaders as Vandenberg and Collins for the ear of Chairman Bradley. But his counsel is always backed by phenomenal brainwork; it gives the Navy at least its share of say-so in the Chiefs' negotia-

tions. This wasn't the case, unfortunately, during Denfeld's tenure as CNO; his reputation as a bumbler and muddy thinker was too well known and too richly deserved.

III

Perhaps Sherman's two outstanding military virtues are his willingness to use the devil's weapons, if necessary, to do God's work, and his singular ability to see beyond the end of his sharp-pointed nose. His last assignment before coming to Washington was the command of the Mediterranean-based Sixth Fleet. There he enjoyed to the utmost his position as the undisputed sea-going big-time operator and consorter with chiefs of state—he even got a chance to go swimming with the comely Queen of Greece. But enjoyment aside, Sherman picked up the valuable knowledge that “naval forces have been truly defined as the precision tools of diplomacy.” He applied this knowledge to good advantage at the time of the Italian elections. His fleet steamed up and down the Italian coast; his carrier-based warplanes roared over the boot in tight combat formation. And Sherman never winced at the thought that must inevitably have struck him: this is just what Stalin would like to be doing. For Sherman's naval operations were definitely in the realm of electioneering.

Depending on where one sits, this sort of electioneering can be considered as (1.) a promise of support for the forces of right and freedom; or (2.) an imperialistic threat of terror against the Italian people.

Sherman, as commander of the Mediterranean Fleet, never underestimated his own importance or that of his command. The general feeling in Washington is that the Mediterranean is today a United Nations lake because of the presence there of American ships. Yet, when Sherman became CNO, one of his first acts was to by-pass his old Sixth Fleet and reinforce the Pacific Fleet to the extent of one carrier, one heavy cruiser and several destroyers. Had he not done so, it is likely that the United States would have been completely stymied when the Korean war broke out.

Sherman is the first professional aviator to head the Navy. Mean old Ernie King, popularly credited with being the most cantankerous man ever to wear Navy blue, affected wings, but he was actually a battleship admiral. Neither Denfeld nor Nimitz had an extensive air background. But Sherman has been a flier almost from scratch, and keeps his pilot's ticket up to date even now. Yet he does not allow his deep feeling for aviation, the Navy's stepchild for too many years, to overcome his

deeper conviction that an effective Navy must be a balanced one.

To Sherman a balanced Navy is not necessarily a Navy bigger in all categories than that of the Soviet Union. He holds that the two big powers are different breeds of cats, with opposing aims and hence opposing naval requirements. A competent geopolitician, he analyzes the situation thus: the Soviet Union is a continental power, the United States an island one. As he puts it:

Our business, in a war with such a power, would be to get at the enemy with speed and in strength, while at the same time keeping open the sea-lanes upon which we depend. Our opponent, on the other hand, would seek to prevent us from transporting our military strength across the ocean, and to cripple that strength by denying to the United States essential overseas trade.

This conflict of missions, says Sherman, makes the fast carrier task force the principal weapon of American offense, and relegates the once-supreme battlewagon to the rôle of an escort vessel. To combat the Russian snorkels, we need three layers of protection around our convoy lanes: the air, the surface and the sub-surface.

How well qualified the Navy is at this moment to deliver the goods is a matter on which Sherman keeps his

own counsel. His boss, Matthews, says flatly we are unready. The admirals feel in general that if a full-scale war should break out today, with Russian submarines roving the seas, we would be in for a hard time for many months. But the Red navy, they are confident, would not be able to cancel out the United States entirely as a maritime power. There would, however, be an awful lot of swimming done by an awful lot of American men.

Sherman's incisive analysis of American naval needs has convinced all but the bitterest naval opponents of defense unification that he knows what he is doing and is going about it fairly. But his fairness did not make itself felt through his handling of the big issues; human nature being what it is, an isolated and relatively unimportant incident, along with the Crommelin remark, did much to give Sherman a Navy-wide reputation as a square-dealer.

The incident concerned Arleigh ("31-Knot") Burke, a carrier captain whose exploits in the "slot" of the Solomons made him a Navy legend. During the B-36 fight, Burke was exposed as head of Op-23, the Navy lobby that compiled most of the admirals' propaganda presentations. When Sherman moved in, he padlocked Op-23 and sent Burke away in what looked like another reprisal

incident. Then Burke came up for promotion to rear admiral. Somehow his name was scratched from the promotion list, and somehow it was restored. Whether press clamor rescued Burke (which is doubtful) or Sherman bucked the Louis Johnson clique to give a well-deserved flag to a capable officer (which is more likely) will never be known definitely. At any rate, Sherman's stock went up; he had said "no reprisals" when he took office, and the Burke incident seemed to indicate to the Navy that he meant what he said.

Sherman's office is hardly more elaborate than that of any of a score of Pentagon brass and braid. It compares in size and splendor with the office of a radio network vice-president or a favored customer's man in a substantial Wall Street house. A blue-gray rug, three or four naval paintings, an autographed photo of Nimitz and a bronze bust of John Paul Jones provide the décor. His desk is neat without being austere — a reflection of the Sherman character that is also evident in his meticulous dress.

The framed family photograph, almost universally present on the desks of service personnel, is absent, but this doesn't reflect an indifference to family. Sherman has been

married for 27 years to a Florida girl who today looks not too many years older than that. Dolores Sherman, aided by four Navy enlisted men who "go with the place," operates the sprawling Chief of Naval Operations quarters at the Naval Observatory on Massachusetts avenue.

Dinner is usually a white-tie affair at the Sherman's, and is often followed by a game of Canasta (at which Mrs. Sherman ordinarily wins) and a romp with the grandchildren, three-and-a-half year old Diane, and one-year-old John Fitzpatrick. The Sherman's only daughter, 26-year-old Betty, and her husband, a 30-year-old lieutenant-commander in Naval Intelligence, are living with the CNO while shopping around for a house.

Mrs. Sherman, meanwhile, is shopping around for a horse. The attractive admiral's lady has the reputation of being a horsewoman, which usually connotes wealth, Warrenton and fox-hunting. Neither she nor the admiral is wealthy beyond the comfortable \$300 a week of a CNO, and her horse-fancying takes the form of owning one excellent horse at a time, and showing it occasionally. The Sher-mans used to ride frequently, but the admiral, who has been called the Navy's hope and salvation, is too busy nowadays for more than the vicarious exercise of a rubdown.

THE NEW SOVIET MAN

BY ADA SIEGEL

WHEN, in the spring of 1949, I was asked to translate a book to be written by Peter Pirogov, a former officer in the Soviet air force, I was reluctant to accept the offer. I had already studied Russian affairs for many years, and had just completed a research job that had brought me in contact, via correspondence, with thousands of Soviet citizens who had refused to go home after the end of the war, or who had escaped from there since, and were now housed in West-zone DP camps. But I had never met or worked with any of these "new Russians," and I felt deep misgivings about the possibility of "doing business" with them.

Fortunately, my curiosity proved stronger than my misgivings. An old Russian proverb has it that one never knows a person until one has consumed a ton of salt with him. It takes a long period of day-to-day living to consume a ton of salt, and it takes a long time to get to know a person —

or a nation. I wanted to know what made Bolshevik-trained young Russians tick, and I knew I would have the chance to find this out for myself, in surroundings more natural than the artificial atmosphere of the international conference or diplomatic gathering. So I went to meet the 29-year-old Soviet flier whose daredevil escape from a Russian airfield to the U. S. zone in Austria had made headlines a few months earlier.

He was diffident and shy at our first meeting. He stood at the window of a New York hotel room, turned quickly when I came in, and shook hands with an abrupt motion. As if choosing his words carefully, he slowly asked me my father's name to address me in the Russian fashion — Ada Issakovna; Ada, daughter of Isaac. Then he said in a low voice and with a nervous glance at the door: "You know what this is all about, don't you?" He handed me a manuscript. As I sat down to read it, he

ADA SIEGEL, a journalist and editor, has been studying Russian affairs for many years. During the last war, she was with the Office of War Information, and then edited the magazine, *This Month*. Lately, she has worked with many of the new Soviet refugees in this country and Europe. She is the translator of Peter Pirogov's book, *Why I Escaped*.

murmured: "Will you excuse me, I can't bear to watch anyone read what I've written." He left the room while I read the first chapter of his then forthcoming book.

Over a year has passed since that day. Peter's book has been published [*Why I Escaped*, Duell, Sloan and Pearce] and I can look back on that period of association with him and appraise it. By now I have consumed a good part of that ton of salt with many other Soviet refugees or "non-returners," as they are called, and have come to know them well. I have read manuscript after manuscript of books, articles, novels and short stories — most of them fascinating despite their literary imperfections, all of them heartbreaking and revealing. I have observed these men, products of thirty years of Soviet training, in an attempt to draw conclusions about the character of the "New Soviet Man." This is indeed more than a catching phrase; it is a psychological reality which we must learn to recognize if we are to wage successfully the battle for men's minds.

II

The "New Soviet Man" is a three-dimensional human being. His personality is a combination of individual traits, honest-to-goodness Russian characteristics and newly-acquired

Bolshevik features. He is not easy to know or to deal with. For me the pieces of this human jigsaw puzzle fell into their proper places in the person of Peter Pirogov, who is a perfect sample of what the Bolshevik system produces in the way of men.

He is now 29. That means he was born in 1920, when the Bolshevik régime was about three years old and pretty firmly entrenched. He came from a peasant family in the Province of Tambov, Russia proper. He grew up in a collective settlement, received his education in Soviet schools, went through the training of the Young Communist League and became a village school teacher until, in 1939, he was inducted into the Red army. His parents had never been among those Russian intellectuals who had had strong ties with the world of ideas both inside Russia and out; he knew no foreign languages and could read nothing but what was permitted. He has never been imprisoned by the Bolsheviks; on the contrary, he was in the process of making a career for himself in the Red air force when he decided to desert.

Peter seemed to be a likeable person. I was surprised because, after the initial excitement over his flight from the Soviet Union with his pilot, Anatole Barsov, I had found the press reports about the two men dull and often unpleasant. They were made

much of during their stay in Austria and Germany, and the publicity really broke when it was reported that they had fled their country after hearing about the beauties of Virginia on the Voice of America broadcasts. Under the auspices of the Virginia Chamber of Commerce they were flown here from Germany and taken on a triumphal tour of that state. I had been neither impressed by nor interested in Pirogov's published opinions on American womanhood or the color of his neckties; and I was distinctly annoyed when it was reported that he "wanted to settle down in Virginia and make a million dollars."

I spent many hours listening to him tell the story of his life and his plans for the future. He talked earnestly, and with a great deal of agitation whenever he touched on matters that concerned him deeply. Despite the attention he attracted in many quarters, he was, of course, lonely. He spoke little English and found it tough to adapt himself to his new life. I doubted that he had much in common — beyond the hatred of the Stalin régime — with the colony of old-time Russian émigrés in New York. Most of them were intellectuals, cosmopolitans in the best sense of the word, and had had no personal contact with life in the Soviet Union for anywhere between 25 to 30 years.

"Do you ever go to see the Soviet films that are being shown in town?" I asked him once.

"No," he replied slowly. "I am afraid."

"Afraid? Of what?"

"Afraid to grow too homesick," he said, as if embarrassed at his weakness. I changed the subject and asked him whether there had been any specific reason for his decision to break with his country.

"No," he said. "It's really difficult for me to put my finger on any one thing. All my life, I had witnessed events that made me angry, unhappy and afraid. Like the time during the collectivization drive when the Soviets took away my Uncle Maxim's only horse, which he had raised from a sick, undernourished filly. I was only ten then but I felt there was something wicked about the whole thing. And when, after the war, I was forced to do the same things to other peasants, I came to hate not just the régime, but myself."

"Did you keep thinking about these things?"

"No. I forgot about them, or tried to. After all, everything I was taught went to make me believe that the Soviets were right in expropriating the 'rich' peasants, the so-called kulaks. I think I even forgot the day when my own father was expropriated as a kulak. . . . He was nothing of

the sort, of course," Peter reassured me quickly, as if he were still defending himself against Soviet accusations.

"Still, I don't understand how you came to hate the régime to the point of fleeing the country if you didn't think about these problems and didn't discuss them with others."

"I thought I had forgotten them. I was planning a career for myself, after all. Then, during the war, the men in the Red army did a lot more talking than ever before and I kept hearing similar stories from others."

"Did you ever read any of the works of Russian writers who were not Bolsheviks, particularly before the Revolution?"

"No. I've heard some of the names, but I know nothing about them or their ideas. Incidentally—" Peter suddenly interrupted himself. "Do you happen to have a picture of Trotsky?"

I was taken aback by the unexpected question. "I'll see. I think there is a picture of the author in Trotsky's biography of Stalin." I got the book for him and Peter stood for a long time looking at the picture in silence. "Why did you ask?" I wanted to know.

"Because I have never seen the face of this man," he answered.

The pattern of Soviet education was emerging in the person of Peter Pirogov. Here was a 29-year-old

Soviet citizen, a teacher by profession, who had never seen the face of the man who was one of the makers of the Soviet state, who had been one of Lenin's closest collaborators, the man who had created the Red army. Neither had he read any but the official misrepresentations of the life of Leon Trotsky.

More than that, Peter had never read and had hardly heard of any of the men who had shaped Russian thinking for over a hundred years before the Revolution — the Liberals and Socialists, the Populists and Anarchists. His hatred of the Bolshevik régime was purely *practical*, based on his personal experiences and those of his friends. He had no ideological convictions and, as a result, he had only nebulous ideas of the kind of Russian government he wanted to see after the fall of the Bolshevik régime.

Peter talked easily about "democracy," but the word meant little to this Bolshevik-trained anti-Bolshevik. During a meeting of Russians in New York, Peter made some suggestion and then sat back to listen to the discussion. After a while, he motioned the chairman and said, looking at his watch: "Gentlemen, you've been debating my proposal for fully 40 minutes. When are you going to *accept* it?"

At another meeting with Ameri-

cans, he was asked whether the Russian people, after so many centuries of autocratic government, were capable of establishing immediately a democratic system. "Definitely," was the dogmatic reply. "In fact, we'll show the Americans a thing or two." This was the kind of typically "Bolshevik" reply heard not only from Pirogov but from many another Soviet refugee abroad. They know more about democracy than the people who live it — which is the familiar pattern of arrogance rooted in ignorance.

One day Peter came to me for "legal" advice. He was beginning to write articles and hoped to earn some money. Somebody had told him that he would have to pay 25 per cent to the Government in taxes. What should he do, he wanted to know — pay it, or keep it to see what "deal" could be made? "After all," he said seriously, "I've given the American Government millions of dollars' worth of publicity with my flight. Why should I give them my earnings as well?" There was a world of contempt in his voice when he said the word "them." It was contempt for "government" as such.

I laughed and explained that in our system of government the Department of Internal Revenue and the Department of State had nothing to do with each other, that there were

no "deals" to be made, and that taxation of every citizen was a democratic institution for the good of all. But it was not always as simple as that to explain to Peter some of the things he had to learn about his new life.

Apart from his personal traits, Peter still shared the traditional characteristics of the Russian. He had the peasant's love for "Mother Earth" and for his people; he betrayed remnants of religious feeling, just after he had succeeded in getting a fellow refugee a job, when he said calmly that the time had come for him to start on the road to "atonement." In many respects he was like the peasant in Tolstoi's novels — shrewd and ignorant, superstitious (as a substitute for religion) and warmhearted. But most of these characteristics were buried beneath layers of Bolshevik indoctrination. It took me a long time to sort out the typically Bolshevik features of the young Russian who, even if he has come to hate the régime, is still its product and its victim.

III

First and foremost, the new Bolshevik man is ignorant of Russian as well as non-Russian matters, particularly in the realms of history, politics, philosophy or economics. He might be a good engineer, and it is quite true that he can read and write, but

since the limits of what he can read and write about are so strictly defined, that achievement has little human value.

The New Soviet Man is, paradoxically, the most rugged of individualists, though reared in a collectivist society. He has to be, for in the Soviet Union the struggle for survival is so all-consuming, the powers ranged against him so mighty, that a man *must* be a ruthless egotist — he must concentrate on himself and his needs to the exclusion of everything else. Peter, for example, displayed more egotism and self-centeredness than any man I have ever known. When I asked him once about the girl he had left behind in Russia, and whether he had loved her, he answered: "I don't think I have ever loved anybody but myself." He had left her knowing that the NKVD was aware of her existence and knew that she had been his girl; and, therefore, that she was liable to suffer for his escape.

Once Peter did not turn up for an appointment with me and I did not hear from him for a few days. I was worried, so I telephoned him at his hotel. The clerk said coldly that Mr. Pirogov had checked out several days ago without leaving a forwarding address. I put the receiver down slowly, thinking of the cases of abduction of anti-Communists by Bol-

shevik agents that I had read about. I began telephoning several people among the Russians in New York until I reached one who told me that Peter was all right; he had moved because the hotel was too expensive. He then gave me Peter's new address, and I telephoned there.

"No," said the clerk, "there is no Mr. Pirogov here."

"But didn't a Russian register at your hotel a few days ago?" I asked.

"A Russian? Why yes, a Mr. Bardin," the man told me.

"Let me speak to him, please," I said.

It was Peter. When I heard his voice I was really angry. I told him that he was not on the stage acting out a who-dunnit, that he could change his address and name three times a day for all I cared, but that he should at least notify the people who must work with him. He simply did not understand what I was talking about. It never dawned on him that anyone might be worried, or that he should concern himself with anything except what he wanted to do at any given moment. Nor could he understand that I might wonder about him when he vanished from his hotels — he played the same trick a second time — or when he seemed to go about for days without sufficient food, or when he postponed an appointment because he had to wash

and press his only shirt. He had nothing but distrust for such personal concern.

This is not simply distrust of the West. The Soviet man is even distrustful of his brother, his son, his wife, his best friend. For he never knows which of them has orders to report every smallest detail of his life and thoughts. Where he comes from, people cannot always afford to worry about each other — unless they have ulterior motives. To escape starvation, or the ever-present terror of the MVD and its slave labor camps, he must be eternally watchful; he can permit no deviation into altruism, friendship or idealism.

The Soviet Union is a land of rigid castes; consequently, the new Bolshevik man turns insultingly arrogant — quite the little commissar — whenever he finds himself in a position of authority, however insignificant. This partly explains the behavior of Red army men in liberated or conquered countries. I have seen it in Peter Pirogov. Soviet workers, who told me of their relations with superiors, big or small, have confirmed that impression. Every one of the bosses seems to acquire with his title a Napoleonic — or is it a Stalinist? — complex, together with a deadly fear for his position and life, and, hence, a distrust of everybody around him. All the way up the line there is meek

submission and fawning on superiors; all the way down the line there is ruthless exploitation and totalitarian power. The new Bolshevik man is insensitive to the sufferings of others; for to endure the constantly repeated spectacle of family, loved ones and friends being arrested, murdered or deported to slave labor, he has to become immune to the pain which that kind of experience would produce in normal people.

Take Peter's reaction to the fate of Anatole Barsov, the man in whom he had confided back in Russia. Together they had worked out their bold plan for escape; together they had carried it out. Theirs must have been a close friendship, for both knew that one careless word — let alone conscious betrayal — would mean tortured death in a cellar of the NKVD, or years behind the barbed wires of a slave labor camp. But Barsov obviously could not adapt himself to the new life in America. He felt lonely, forgotten and useless. When he was cautiously approached by Soviet agents here, he lost his balance and agreed to go back; he even tried to get Pirogov to go with him.

But Pirogov would not leave. He did everything he could to save Barsov, however. For weeks before the climax he walked as in a fever. He placed himself in danger of abduction by the Soviets in a last, desperate

attempt to lure Barsov from them and make him see the folly of his decision. He made a date with Barsov in a Washington restaurant, fully aware that Soviet agents might have prepared to trap him there. Apparently they had — there was a sudden vicious scuffle involving two groups of unknown men, in which Peter was hit over the head and dragged by friendly hands into a waiting car and hence to safety. But Barsov was past saving; he was returned to the Soviets.

Then came the day on which Peter Pirogov faced the press and told them his views on the "Affaire Barsov." I was his interpreter during that conference. I waited for him to say one sentence, one word of pity, of regret that his erstwhile friend was even now facing torture and death. That word never came. "He is stupid," Peter said angrily. "He'll die like a dog within six months." His words were never softened by a single expression of human feeling, of understanding for the weaknesses in Anatole Barsov. "Weakness in the Soviet Union," Peter writes somewhere in his book, "is an admission of guilt. . . ."

VI

This, I admit, is a harsh picture. But it is the picture of an artificially-created man, whose fundamental decent and human traits still live within him. They will reappear if given the

chance; they are reappearing already among those refugees who are carving out a new life for themselves. And yet, this is a picture, which must be drawn if we are to know what everyday life is like for the average Russian. I am not speaking here of physical poverty; I am concerned with the spiritual enslavement of the human personality, the tortuous creation of a new type of man for whom Terror, hardened into a perfect, all-embracing system, is as natural as the daily morning shave in America.

Hundreds of thousands of these average Russians, drawn from every part of the country and from every stratum of Soviet society, have used the last war to escape from their country, or have refused to go back. They are not an ideological group in any sense; they form a true cross section of the Russian peoples. Most of them are young; like Peter Pirogov, they are products of the Soviet system.

Ignorant and indoctrinated though they are, these men are also burning with intense hatred for the Stalin régime; they are potentially our most important allies. Every one of them I have met is anxious to "pay" for his hard-won liberty by helping to free his fellow Russians. None can understand why they were permitted to come here only to be forgotten. They are amazed at our indifference to

what they have to tell us about Bolshevism and its meaning for us; they are disillusioned that we ignore them as partners in the common struggle. Added to this sense of futility and loneliness, the new Bolshevik man now in our midst suffers from a lack of self-discipline, an inability to organize his own life. He knows how to obey orders, but not how to think for himself. The Bolshevik system planned all his activities, from morning until night. At the same time, Bolshevik propaganda daily assured him that he was a vital cog in the machinery of Socialist progress. The new Bolshevik man, suddenly turned rebel, now sees himself as rudderless, useless and abandoned; he is in danger of developing a state of mind which might well come to be called "Barsovism."

Barsovism is the feeling of despair a Bolshevik-trained young Russian reaches after a period of neglect here or in German DP camps. When that state is reached, he becomes a perfect target for the Soviet agitator or his own "bad thoughts," as Pirogov once told me in near-hysteria. He will snap out of it, if he has help and understanding. If not, he becomes one of "the hundreds of disillusioned, bitter persons" who, according to the International Refugee Organization, "are drifting back to the Communist

countries fully aware of the fate that awaits them. . . ."

As Americans, we should consider ourselves responsible for the spiritual as well as the physical welfare of these people, because one Barsov returning voluntarily to Russia, after risking his life to escape from there, is a perfect setup for the Soviet propaganda machine. Humanitarianism aside, we must give these people every chance to adjust themselves to life in a democracy. We must provide opportunities for them to study, to exchange ideas and discuss their problems; we must create outlets for their vital urge to "tell the world"; we must utilize their abilities and experiences for broadcasts to Russia, to the satellite countries and — more important in terms of immediacy — to Soviet occupation personnel in Eastern Germany and Austria. Such personnel are extremely susceptible to democratic propaganda; they should be spoken to by "their own" people, whose language and mental make-up they understand. This must be done soon if we are to prevent Barsovism from spreading among the masses of Soviet refugees. The struggle we are involved in is not an old-fashioned war, but an ideological war — an international civil war. Our staunchest allies are those who know the Bolshevik régime best because they have suffered from it most: the Russian peoples.

THE GREAT UNLEARNING

BY ABRAHAM MYERSON, M.D.

"And the children suspect nothing and reach the age of life with a bandage over their eyes and reason — without suspecting what the under side of existence means — without knowing that people do not think as they speak, do not talk as they act — without knowing that one must live in a state of continual warfare or at best of armed peace, with everybody — without ever imagining that one is always sure to be tricked if one is simple, deceived if one is sincere, maltreated if one is kind and good.

"Some go on to the moment of their death in this blindness of loyalty, honor, and probity — being so thoroughly up-right that nothing can open their eyes.

"Others, ultimately disabused, yet unable to understand, are perpetually stumbling here and there in wild desperation; and die at last in the belief that they have been the sport of exceptional ill fortune."

(Maupassant: "Forgiveness")

SOONER or later the alert-minded youngster in our civilization dis-

covers that his elders have indoctrinated him with a distorted, partial, and devitalized view of life and formed a great conspiracy to prevent and pervert a full view of the facts of life (and I do not mean by this merely the bees and butterfly learning of sex). There then begins the great unlearning, which may be followed by the great relearning or may not, since few go beyond a closemouthed and hidden cynicism created by their disillusionment. To many it comes as a great shock to learn that parents may be unfaithful to each other, cruel, stupid, and utterly unworthy of the respect and honor that is enjoined upon each child by all of the great religions of the world; that grownups in general are a sad lot, quite definitely and piously pointing out one way of life to their children and secretly living another, and that few of them know anything thoroughly beyond their own little bread-and-butter learning.

The children eventually realize

DR. ABRAHAM MYERSON was a noted neurologist and psychiatrist, and a voluminous author. This article is a chapter from his forthcoming book, *Speaking of Man*, which will be published this month by Alfred A. Knopf. His previous books include *The Nervous Housewife*, and *The German Jew — His Share in Modern Culture*.

that the mother is not at all beautiful, or if she makes a good appearance, it is by a painfully assiduous technique. Moreover, they discover that pettiness, jealousy, and neurosis are not at all uncommon in the mother they are supposed to revere. They learn that the father is not the great man; in fact, that he usually is a little man, not particularly strong, often foolishly despotic and easily hoodwinked, certainly not important.

But this is not the most of the great unlearning. "You find," said one very acute boy to me, "that you are supposed to put your brains in your pocket about many of the things of life, about sex and marriage and parenthood—that even to think about them would be enough to destroy all your values. . . . You learn that religion is to be believed in without question. . . . You find that politics and politicians are crooked, that you really cannot trust anybody. Then you are supposed to believe in the patriots of yesterday, although debunkers show you that the patriots of one era are the politicians of an earlier one. . . . Whenever you strip off disguises, you find that everyone wears masks, everyone fakes and struts and lies in some degree, little or great. You do yourself, to your surprise. And then, to cap the absurd climax, you know that when you grow up, you'll lie to your own chil-

dren about the real nature of man and the world."

I grant that this boy was direct in his powers of speech and exceptionally frank and bitter in his reactions to the great falsity, which was his term after he heard about the great unlearning. But less articulate young people find the unlearning no less destructive.

In some groups boys and girls learn with shock, relatively late in life, of what is deliberately hidden in our civilization. Many of the popular books to initiate the young have been of the "birds and bees" type. They teach the child the words, but leave out the music of this cacophonous symphony and so are only feebly preparatory for maturity. Written words of warning are as nothing against the sudden meeting of eyes, a casual contact of thighs, or the pulsating passion of two young bodies clasped together, let us say, in the permitted dance. And because of the strong forces against the enlightenment of children, even these feeble books do not reach the vast majority of the young in our culture. Most children learn what they can by stray hints or quick revealing glimpses of the hidden sexual life, perhaps by a stark example from the animal world, or occasionally through little orgies of revelation and experiment.

You can get some idea of the hid-

den when you read the anthropologists' account of the lives of children in what we call aboriginal societies. Consider the writings of Malinowski and Margaret Mead, to cite only two of a busy and indicative group. Early the savage child sees birth and death, and he grows up in the nakedness and viscosity of these initiating and terminal events which our children view rarely, if ever, in their stark reality. The organs of sex are no palpitating mystery to the savage child, and it is hard to see how romantic and lyrical sexuality could arise to falsify the actualities in Samoa or among the Australian groups. For them clothes, while they may beautify, do not hide or mystify life, and animality, which is basic in man as in all other creatures, is not a hideous and reproachful thing, since excretion and copulation are relatively public and not particularly obscene. Virginity is no goddess, and the final experiences of sex are not deferred and forbidden, while the exciting and preparatory forepleasures are extolled and practiced.

II

The romantic era in sex is a recent event in the history of the man-woman difficulty, and so it is only in our civilization that unlearning in sex, love, and marriage has become important. The ecstatic expectations of

living on love and kisses are roughly shattered by the shocking discovery that the Beautiful Woman has troublesome bodily organs and functions (has viscera and is visceral, to use biological terms) and needs much technique to be mysterious and charming, while the Virile Man is only so at times and at other times is so-so. Too much has been expected because of the conspiracy of popular novels, plays, and love songs, and too little has been known because of moral codes. In almost no department of our early lives is there so much false direction, misinformation, and invalid expectation as in sex, love, and marriage. The amount of relearning necessary so taxes physical endurance, emotional stability, and mental integrity as to be a favorite explanation for mental disorder and social unhappiness.

The stresses of our civilization become more pressing as we go from nakedness to ceremonious and conventional clothing, from animal to human social living. We teach the child to hide the animal in him. This is the basis of manners and morals; this accounts for the development of the obscene and the vile, asceticism and holiness. Its development has created the world, the flesh, and the Devil, and it underlies all the notions of that trinity. All these and many other matters to come up relate to

this struggle against the animal, which Freud would call the battle between the id and the ego and the superego, which St. Augustine would label the struggle between God and the Devil, which a Puritan in reverse — like D. H. Lawrence — would stigmatize as the conflict between the mystic dark good and the arid morality.

There are some who are too conventional, too timid, or too stupid to see the contradictions between life as taught and life as it is. There are those who are crushed or torn asunder. There are those who give lip homage and outward deference, but live secret lives with their tongues in their cheeks. There are those who suffer from disharmonies in one or more fields, as when acquisitiveness finds reasonable scope, but sex is the great problem, or vice versa. As Aldous Huxley wisely said in the brilliant days of *Point Counter Point*, there are as many perversions of the acquisitive impulses as of the sexual. And there are those who reach a reasonable compromise, with wisdom as the main keynote of their lives.

The great unlearning may not even be clearly conscious. It may be so hidden in the survival pattern of actions as not even to be perceived. We see it in the father who reproves his son for stealing an apple, but cheats on his income tax and sees no inconsistency between his stern dis-

approval of his son and his smug approval of himself. The codes of life by which men govern their actions are, in short, declared and hidden at one and the same time. The disharmonies may be cynically expressed or felt with guilt and dismay. Authority arises to work out codes, which become enthroned. Hypocrisy acknowledges morality, but works in disguises and under cover; crime circumvents and defies; and endless modifications of reaction take place as the unlearning is followed in greater or lesser degree by the relearning.

All this has been said in a thousand and one ways by pessimists, cynics, and realists. It has been said very well by the author of *The Natural History of Nonsense*, Bergan Evans:

Mice and men are alike in this respect, and modern society sometimes looks as if it were deliberately designed by some fiendish experimenter in order to drive us insane. We are brought up to expect rewards for certain kinds of behavior and then thrown into a world in which none of the signals works. We are taught as children to be kind, self-sacrificing, and helpful, never to be greedy or aggressive. Then we must live in a ruthlessly competitive economy. We are taught to be honest, in preparation for a world in which honesty is often penalized and dishonesty, in a thousand

forms, is often rewarded. Our ambition is stimulated and we are assured of success if we will only "apply ourselves," when actually, by the very nature of things, nine out of ten must be disappointed, and chance carries as much weight as merit.

The result is mass frustration and despair. Only the stoical and the cynical can preserve a measure of stability; yet stoicism is the wisdom of madness and cynicism the madness of wisdom. So none escapes.

This is really a statement of the experimental production of mental disease in animals, one of the great achievements of the Russian Pavlov.

Do we need, does mankind need, to be trained by priests and pundits, to be conditioned in our early childhood into the great expectation that becomes for most the great frustration?

In part we must discipline and disguise our native desires, because unvarnished life is not worth living despite its "naturalness," and there is an artistic trend to civilized living and believing which is a reason for being.

The road from the tree-dwellers, our ancestors, has been a painful one, but we cannot go back. We must find ways to develop our powers and yet not crucify the aboriginal who is the main reality within us. I believe this double process of development is possible to us. Otherwise we are in this dilemma: if we overemphasize the animal, we live in a world bereft of beauty, order, and disciplined achievement; if we crush the animal, we destroy the basis of desire and satisfaction, health and endurance, and make human development so one-sided as to fall into despair.

PHRASE ORIGINS—70

STORMY PETREL: *A person who is fond of quarrels or who is the forerunner of disputes and trouble is often termed a stormy petrel. The use of this expression arises from a popular belief about natural history. Because of its manner of flying close to the surface of the water in search of food, the bird known as the petrel received its name from St. Peter, who walked the sea. One species of the petrel (also called Mother Carey's chickens) is believed to be much in evidence just before a storm.*

MORRIS ROSENBLUM

THE HISTORY OF SOME "DIRTY" WORDS

BY FALK JOHNSON

THE radio comedian who quipped that "the Mason-Dixon line is the dividing line between *you-all* and *youse-guys*" was pointing up one of the most conspicuous facts about language — the fact that the same language is used in different ways in different places. Such geographical variations in the choice of words are well-known, of course. And so are the geographical variations in pronunciation, such as the New Englander's pronunciation of *last* with the sound of the *a* of *father*, though most other Americans pronounce *last* with the sound of the *a* in *hat*. But another type of geographical variation in language is not so well known: a variation in words which are to be regarded as vulgar.

Though it is true that most of the words which are considered vulgar in one English-speaking area are also considered vulgar in other such areas, there are exceptions, and some of these exceptions are rather startling. Some words which are regarded as impeccably proper in one place are regarded

as unspeakably improper in another. For example, some words which are completely harmless in this country — words like *bum* and *bloody* — are "bad" words in England. And even in this country some words, such as *pregnant*, are "good" in one place and "bad" in another.

Consider first a few of the words which are regarded as harmless in this country, but are "bad" words in England. *Bloody* is one of these. American readers are not jolted at all by the word in the following two lines from George Bernard Shaw's play, *Pygmalion*:

"Are you walking across the Park, Miss Doolittle?"

"Walk! Not bloody likely. I am going in a taxi."

But these two lines caused quite a stir in England when the play was first presented about forty years ago. In fact, the British scholar Eric Partridge has declared that this use of the word *bloody* "startled London, and, indeed, fluttered the whole Empire." Partridge says, too, that "Much of

FALK JOHNSON'S last article on language for the MERCURY, "Our Clumsy Alphabet," appeared in June 1950. He teaches English at the University of Illinois.

the interest felt in the play was due to the heroine's utterance of this banned word. It was waited for with trembling, heard shudderingly."

Though the public use of *bloody* is no longer as shocking in England as it was forty years ago and though, as Dean Inge has suggested, the use of the word in the speech of the British workingman has begun to indicate merely that an adjective or a noun may be expected to follow it immediately, *bloody* is still a word to be used with some caution in England. As recently as 1936, according to H. L. Mencken, "the magistrates at Bath were fining a Fascist soap-boxer for uttering it in a speech." As recently as World War II, it was so "bad" that a booklet prepared for American troops stationed in England advised them not to use the word in the presence of ladies. And as recently as 1948 the residents of Australia were reported as shocked when the Australian Broadcasting Commission inadvertently let the word *bloody* slip out over the air waves. The slip was regarded there as such a serious one that the executives of the Australian Broadcasting Commission had to issue a formal statement to the public, giving an elaborate explanation of how the word was broadcast through no fault of their own.

Why is *bloody* a "bad" word in England and Australia? Nobody

knows for sure. Scholars and laymen have set forth numerous theories about the word — and have agreed upon none of them. One theory is that the word is derived from an oath; another, that it is derived from an indecency involving menstruation; and there are still other theories. But, regardless of how *bloody* got its "badness," there can be no doubt that for a long time it has been considered "bad" in England and that it has not been considered "bad" in America.

Another word which has been offensive in England but not in the United States is *bug*. Until recently *bug* has been used in England to refer to only a single kind of insect, the bedbug; and in England it has not been considered polite to discuss bedbugs in public. As a result, when American books and stories are revised for publication in the United Kingdom, the word *bug* is often stricken out. For instance, in a British edition of Edgar Allan Poe's famous story, *The Gold Bug*, the title was changed to *The Golden Beetle*.

Person is another word which stands lower on the scale of propriety in England than in the United States. No one in the United States is offended by being called a "person," but, as Professor Robert Withington of Smith college once pointed out, "The thoughtless American who characterizes an English lady as 'a very

charming person' is likely to be rebuked in a London drawing room." In England, according to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the word *person* often indicates a young woman "when the speaker does not desire to specify her position as 'girl,' 'woman,' or 'lady.'" The insulting implication of the British use of the word is made even clearer by a speech in W. S. Gilbert's *Mikado*, where a character says: "They are not young ladies, they are young persons."

As a final example of a word which rates high in the United States and low in England, consider *bum*. In England *bum* still has the same meaning which it had when Dr. Samuel Johnson defined it in his dictionary of 1755 as "the buttocks; the part upon which we sit." In fact, it has had that meaning in England since the fourteenth century or earlier. Shakespeare used it with this meaning when he had "an Ancient Lord" in *Measure for Measure* (II, i, 228) say to a clown: "Troth, and your bum is the greatest thing about you."

More recently, a British dictionary has defined *bum bags* as a "popular" word for "trousers." Another British dictionary has defined *bum-brusher* as a "schoolmaster." And yet another recent British dictionary has called the word *bum* "decidedly vulgar." It's no wonder, therefore, that American troops in England a few years ago

were warned to avoid the use of this word, too, in the presence of ladies. And it's no wonder that British cinema-goers were not permitted to hear Al Jolson sing "Hallelujah, I'm a Bum." In the British version of the film, Jolson politely sang, "Hallelujah, I'm a Tramp."

II

Just as there are words like *bum*, *person*, *bug*, and *bloody* which are "good" in the United States and "bad" in England, so are there words which are "good" in England and "bad" in the United States. British travelers in this country have always been struck by the fact that some words which are acceptable in England are not acceptable here.

One such traveler was Captain Frederick Marryat, who remarked during a visit here in 1839 that "There are certain words which are never used in America, but an absurd substitute is employed." Another British traveler in America during the 1830's was Fanny Trollope, who said:

Hardly a day passed in which I did not discover something or other which I had been taught to consider as natural as eating, was held in abhorrence by those around me; many words to which I had never heard an objectionable meaning attached, were totally interdicted, and the strangest paraphrastic phrases substituted.

Among the words which were taboo in America during the nineteenth century, but were not taboo in England, were *corset*, *shirt*, *leg*, and *woman*. Commenting upon one of these, Fanny Trollope said:

The ladies here [in New York City] have an extreme aversion to being called *women*, I don't exactly understand why. Their idea is, that that term designates only the lower or less-refined classes of female human-kind. This is a mistake which I wonder they should fall into, for in all countries in the world, queens, duchesses, and countesses, are called women. . . .

Americans today, like those of more than a hundred years ago, still avoid certain words which the British do not avoid. One of these words is *funny* — a word which has been considered objectionable in this country at least since 1929, when the executives of the Keith vaudeville circuit banned it from their stages. But *funny* is not considered so objectionable in England. Only a few years ago, when a British film, *Fanny by Gaslight*, made the rounds of theatres in the United Kingdom, the word *Fanny* appeared conspicuously on the marquees almost everywhere. But when the same film started making the rounds of theatres in this country, the word was considered too vulgar, and the title *Fanny by Gaslight* was changed to *Men of Evil*.

Though British films may be "edited" before they reach American audiences, the speech of the British travelers in this country normally isn't "edited," and the results are sometimes surprising. For example, a writer in a scholarly journal, *American Speech*, reported a few years ago: "I have heard a British lady, employed in an American college, say most naïvely in a mixed group: 'Some students knocked me up early this morning,' meaning merely that they had awakened her by rapping on the door of her apartment."

III

Words occupy different positions on the scale of propriety, not only in different countries, but also at different places in the same country — even in a comparatively small country like England. Less than a hundred years ago, for instance, the word *wench* was reported in one part of England as a term of endearment, used especially by fathers in speaking to their daughters. But at the same time in another part of England it was reported as a highly abusive term. More recently, Archibald Lyall, author of a book called *It Isn't Done, or, The Future of Taboo Among the British Islanders*, has pointed out that newspapers in London and in the provinces sometimes print different versions of the same "press association"

news story. To illustrate: during a famous courtroom trial the provincial newspapers printed the following sentence — “There was not a shred of evidence to show that any of the women were prostitutes.” But the word *prostitute* was too much for the London papers, which changed the sentence to read: “There was not a shred of evidence to show that any of the women were of a certain character.”

In *Lars Porsena, or, The Future of Swearing and Improper Language*, Robert Graves tells the story of an Englishman arrested for using improper language in a village he was visiting. Brought to trial, this man insisted that his language would not have been offensive in his home town, and he facetiously remarked that before going to London he would get a swearing atlas, so that he would know in what blocks he could use what words.

In America, too, certain words have had and still have different degrees of propriety at different places. Professor George Philip Krapp of Columbia university has pointed out that early in the nineteenth century the word *damn* (or *damned*) was considered a “bad” word in New England and a “good” word in the South. As evidence of this fact, Professor Krapp has told about the impeachment of Senator Samuel Chase

in 1805 for using the word *damned*. During the impeachment proceedings before the United States Senate, Chase’s lawyer said:

However it may sound elsewhere in the United States, I cannot apprehend it will be considered *very* offensive, *even* from the mouth of a judge on this side of the Susquehanna; — to the southward of that river it is in familiar use . . . supplying frequently the place of the word *very* . . . connected with subjects the most pleasing; thus we say indiscriminately a very good or a damned good bottle of wine, a damned good dinner, or a damned clever fellow.

And just as *damned* was apparently used freely south of the Susquehanna, so was *darn* used freely farther north. Professor Krapp, speaking of the recorded uses of the word *darn*, says that “All the early examples are localized in New England” — apparently no Southerner had ever used *darn* in print at that time!

During the early years of the nineteenth century the standards of verbal propriety differed, not only between the North and South, but also between the East and West. At any rate David Thomas, who wrote *Travels Through the Western Country in the Summer of 1816*, declared that people in the West cursed much more than those in the East. He said that at his home, which was not far from Ithaca, New York:

Profane language is rarely heard from any person who pretends to decency, except in a paroxysm of vexation. Here [in Western Pennsylvania] it is an everyday amusement. . . . We had the first specimen in the teamsters who were taking flour from Waterford to Erie; and heard more vile language in one night than in the preceding six months.

Another Eastern visitor in what is now the Midwest noticed the increased use of vile language and commented upon it by saying, rather reticently, that the people there swore "with a remarkable breadth of expression." Today the West may not curse more than the East, and today the Susquehanna river certainly is not a dividing line between a country of *darn's* and a country of *damm's*; but today, too, there are words which are regarded as "good" in one region and "bad" in others.

Closet is an example. In most parts of the country it is a "good" word — a neutral word like *house*, *sun*, or *organization*. But that is not true in the Ozarks and in certain other areas. A woman who began life as an Ozark hillbilly recently published an article in *American Speech*; she reported that in her childhood "*To go to the closet* had the same significance as *to go to the bathroom*. . . . The hillbillies had no closets in their homes, and I thought closet meant *privy* exclu-

sively." Therefore, she says, "I was amazed at the Biblical injunction about praying in the closet."

Vance Randolph, another writer about the customs of the Ozarks, has reported several expressions which were taboo in that region but were not taboo in most other parts of the country. In an article published some years ago in *Dialect Notes*, a scholarly journal, he said that a couple of "women in Scott County, Arkansas, raised a great clamor for the arrest of a man who had mentioned a bull-calf in their presence." He said, too, that "a tourist's casual reference to *shirt-studs* once caused considerable embarrassment to some very estimable hill-women of my acquaintance." He also reported that *alter* was an unmentionable word there, for it meant "to castrate," and that *prides* was also unmentionable, for it meant "genitalia." But Randolph made clear, however, that these mountaineers were not complete prudes: they frequently called a prostitute a *whore-bitch*.

Such local variations in vulgarity occur, not only in backwoods places like the Ozarks, but also in large cities. This point is illustrated by a story which H. L. Mencken tells about Philadelphia. He once wrote a play in which a character was called "A Virgin," but when the Philadelphia *Public Ledger* published excerpts

from this play in 1916, the editors seemed to be afraid to print "A Virgin." Instead, they substituted "A Young Girl." Commenting upon this substitution, Mencken said, "Apparently, even *virgin* is still regarded as too frank in Philadelphia."

The large American city which is most famous for its prudery is, of course, Boston. Because of its repeated banning of books, plays, and motion pictures, it has gained a reputation of being an island of prudery in a sea of frankness. But Boston and Philadelphia are by no means the only large American cities where there are local variations in the vulgarity of certain words. From Atlanta, Ga., comes another story illustrating how words pertaining to sex have different meanings in different places and, therefore, different degrees of propriety. When a public-health nurse in Atlanta was discussing venereal diseases in a class of Negro women, she used the word *intercourse* and noticed that the women looked blank whenever she used the word. Finally one of the women volunteered, "What you mean, ma'am, is correspondence, isn't it?" And then all the faces lit up with understanding.

In this instance the word *correspondence* is undoubtedly a regional relic — a word which survives with a certain meaning in one linguistic

community but does not retain that meaning in most other linguistic communities. That this use of *correspondence* is a survival rather than an innovation is suggested by evidence found in the *Oxford English Dictionary*, which says that in England during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, one of the meanings of *correspondence* was "sexual intercourse." Today, though this meaning has died out in most areas of the English-speaking world, it has survived occasionally, as it did with the group of women in Atlanta.

The best evidence for local variations in the vulgarity of words is to be found in a mammoth and little-known piece of American scholarship — the New England portion of the partly completed *Linguistic Atlas of the United States and Canada*. Investigators for the *Atlas* went to all parts of New England and interviewed representatives of all types of people: city and country people, rich and poor, educated and uneducated, young and old, religious and irreligious people. During the course of these interviews, each of which lasted for several hours and included more than 800 questions, the *Atlas* investigators asked: "How do you say 'She is pregnant'?"

When confronted by this question, the New Englanders responded in a great many different ways. Some of

the people hesitated slightly before replying. Some replied in whispers, though no one was in the room except the interviewer and the person being interviewed. And some refused to discuss the matter at all, even in whispers. So strong was the resistance to this question, say the editors of the *Atlas*, that "In some cases the field-workers thought it advisable to refrain from asking for these words." One investigator dropped the question entirely.

On the other hand, some people showed no hesitancy at all in discussing their "pregnant" words. When questioned, they came out with answers which were completely casual and matter of fact. And some of the people were even eager to answer. When asked for the jocular or vulgar terms which they used, they immediately ripped off such expressions as *She's getting out of shape*, *She's wearing her apron strings high*, *She's coming in soon*, or *She's been knocked up higher than a kite*.

Such infinite variations in what

words are considered vulgar and what words are not considered vulgar lead to the conclusion that verbal vulgarity is, at least in part, a personal or an individual matter. Chances are that no two persons have exactly the same standards for determining what is and what is not vulgar — that no two people will agree 100 per cent on what words are permissible in certain social situations. One person will unhesitatingly use a word where another person would try to avoid it.

In the light of all these local and individual variations in vulgarity, it is obvious that such "word" industries as radio, television, motion pictures and publishing cannot please everybody. It is obvious that some of the words which are spoken or written in the sincere belief that they are proper will be regarded by somebody, somewhere, as improper. And it is also obvious that the best policy to follow in these matters is tolerance — at least until an adequate swearing atlas comes along.



THE THEATRE

by GEORGE JEAN NATHAN



MORE AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

ONE of the most vituperative letters that has ever come my way was from my former old and good friend, St. John Ervine. In reviewing his play, *Boyd's Shop*, his most inferior and luckless dramatic effort, I allowed — generously, I thought — that it had probably been a left-handed effort and with the box-office perhaps in his usually independent mind. Evidently, if puzzlingly, convinced that the play was everything it plainly was not, he took such offense at what I meant to be a charitable view of it that in all these long, intervening years he has never again spoken to me.

* * *

Eugene O'Neill, attempting to cast his play, *A Moon for the Misbegotten*, found himself stumped in the instance of its heroine: an inexperienced girl of the soil in her twenties, tall and of powerful physique, but withal

of an inner gentleness and maternal warmth. He asked me if I knew of any young actress who could possibly play the rôle and I mentioned one, an unknown, whom I had seen in a summer stock performance of, oddly enough, *Little Women*. He tried her out in the difficult part but found that she lacked the acting experience for it, as he had also found in the cases of several other girls who had been recommended by others. "What I'll evidently have to do if the play is produced in the future," he concluded, "is to abandon the hope of discovering a young girl for the rôle and cast it with a mature actress of, say, forty or more, and have her play it down in the age scale. The rôle of a young girl who is supposed to be lacking in worldly experience takes a woman of considerable worldly experience to make the lack seem convincing." But the search for even such an actress was fruitless, and the play remains still in abeyance.

Some years ago I was fetched by the idea of dramatizing in Shakespeare's own terms the story of Romeo and Juliet had they lived. To this end I employed and orchestrated the early portions of *Romeo and Juliet*, the middle portion of *Othello*, and the last portion of *The Taming of the Shrew*, and cast the result, naturally, into three acts.

Each and every word and line was Shakespeare's; I added not a syllable of my own. The play was published under the title, *The Avon Flows*, and was duly reviewed in the public prints by the late Charles Hanson Towne. "Though I have known him for many years," Towne wrote, "I never suspected and was overwhelmed to find that Nathan is the possessor of rich poetic gifts; many of his passages would do credit to the Bard himself." There were some other passages of Shakespeare, however, that Towne lamented as being unworthy of me and my remarkable talent.

* * *

In my early days as a writer, I was at one time bothered by the circumstance that my work was being published in an inferior magazine of relatively small circulation. "Don't fret," Finley Peter Dunne counselled me. "If your stuff is any good, the right people are sure to see it." It was one of the two best pieces of advice I have

ever received. What the other was, I don't remember.

* * *

I once wrote a lengthy review of one of Augustus Thomas' philosophical dramas in which I demonstrated through direct quotation of the plot and dialogue that it would make much more sense and be a more intelligent play if it were played backwards. Thomas never forgave me.

* * *

George C. Tyler, the well-known producer of another day, once got in touch with me on my return from an annual trip to Europe and asked me if I had seen any play that had made a considerable impression on me, since he was at a loss for a good script and was eager to get busy at once with a new production. I heartily commended to him George Birmingham's satirical comedy, *General John Regan*, which I had seen in London and which had had me laughing for fully two hours. He got hold of the play, liked it as much as I did, and lost no time in putting it on in New York. Most of the newspaper reviews were poor and the play lost money. Some years later, he again sought me out for a suggestion, since again he could not find anything that tickled his fancy. "Then why not put on *General John Regan* again?" I asked him. Admiring the play as he did, he replied, "An excellent idea. I'll do it!" He

promptly went about preparing a second production and presently opened it on the road. Again the reviews were unfavorable and the play failed and lost even more money. "Well, anyway," he said to me, "*we* like it." There was a period later in his life, indeed, when only lack of funds prevented him from producing the play for a third time.

* * *

The French have never been particularly noted for their indifference to American dollars and have always exercised themselves craftily to please the tourist into parting with them. In the attempt to demonstrate their warm friendship for him, they resort to many ingratiating devices. The most peculiar of these came to my notice one night many years ago when I attended a revue in one of the Left Bank music halls. The finale brought on the customary quota of nude women who, after parading down to the footlights, turned around and affectionately disclosed the American flag surmounted by a likeness of President Calvin Coolidge painted on their behinds.

* * *

Quite a few of my friends among the novelists at one time or another in their lives have essayed the dramatic form and have asked me to read and criticize their efforts. I may say proudly that, though I agreed to

oblige them, not one has paid the slightest attention to any suggestions I may have imparted and all save one did not volunteer any thanks for my trouble. The one exception was F. Scott Fitzgerald, who had written his sole attempt at drama, *The Vegetable*, and who, as a token of his gratitude for my reading the script, presented me with the gift of a linen handkerchief, neatly lodged in tissue paper. When finally I got around to wearing it in an outer coat pocket, I noticed that several people were eyeing it with a puzzled expression. I discovered that it was one of Fitzgerald's initialed, used own which, though unwashed, had been scrupulously pressed into the semblance of a new one.

Looking over and discussing with Sinclair Lewis an act of a play he was in the process of writing, I intimated that it was much too talky and that a deal of the dialogue might be profitably eliminated in favor of more suggestive stage business and action. One whole long love passage, I pointed out, could well be reduced to a single look that the heroine would bestow on the hero. He put me in my place with the tart remark, "No dice! I like to hear people talk a lot."

* * *

I met Eugene Brieux just once. Though he was then riding high as a playwright and had received Shaw's accolade, he was living in cramped

quarters over a butcher's shop in a shabby section of Paris. I went to see him to discuss several short play scripts for the magazine I was then associated with editorially. During the whole two hours I visited with him, he never ceased talking for so much as one minute about a single subject: money.

* * *

When I returned from a five days' visit in Hollywood and recorded my opinions on the place, I was taken to task by some of its inmates for venturing the views after so brief a stay. "No one," they protested, "can possibly judge Hollywood in so short a time." While I was too considerate to offer the reply that anyone with any experience in observation should be able to appraise Hollywood in even less time than he would require to appraise a conflagration, flood, or any other such calamity, I speculated openly on just what it was that afflicted the denizens of the area. Hollywood itself, I found, was essentially a string of sideshows, some of them amusing, without, however, anything resembling an authentic circus, save only the sawdust and the smell. And its inmates, I determined, were for the most part men and women who, in their belief that they were God-given geniuses, seemed to be suffering nevertheless and paradoxically from a perverted atheism. They were, it

seemed to me, arrogantly hiding behind their self-doubts. Their goals, once achieved, were privately seen by them to be nothing, wrapped in tinsel which lost its sheen in short order. They had money, but it was as counterfeit to them compared to money honorably earned in pursuit of any real art. They were, all of them except the youngest and more foolish, homesick for a home they knew they did not have.

* * *

Little is more offensive to a practicing critic than the feigned goodwill of persons whose work he has expressed contempt for. I have in my lifetime experienced several such hypocrites and on each occasion when they have offered me their pseudo-generous geniality they have made me sick at the stomach, though an equally hypocritical gentlemanliness has kept me from showing it in their presence.

* * *

I have seldom written a line I did not believe and, on the exceptional occasions when I have not believed one, I have found that I believed it after I had written it.

* * *

A devastatingly bad review of one's work is not in the least embarrassing to a man who knows himself, but an exaggeratedly laudatory review may well be, since any such man appreciates that it is undeserved and feels a

little silly when people who chance to have read it mention it to him.

* * *

The biggest theatrical swindle I have encountered in my more than forty years of professional theatregoing was something named *The London Follies*, produced in Weber's Theatre in New York in the early years of the present century. The advance advertising heralded it as "England's wittiest revue with the original London cast"; the prices for opening night seats were raised for the event; and a representative and eager audience was on hand when the curtain went up only to reveal a bare stage with a second-hand piano on it around which stood eight seedy looking male and females (the entire company) who for the next hour alternately sang stale songs off key and cracked jokes of an even more ancient vintage. The disgusted audience began to file out of the theatre after the first half hour and not more than twenty people were in the house when the second half of the thing got under way. The atrocity closed down instant.

* * *

What respect the critic, William Winter, may have enjoyed in certain quarters faded when he allowed himself to be hired by David Belasco to write the latter's biography. Though in his critical capacity he had always looked askance at sex and so-called

immorality in the drama and had torn violently into any plays which, in his estimation, did not conform to puritanical standards, and though Belasco had produced a number of exhibits of the kind which had outraged him as a critic, his eulogy of the boss was unrestrained. Few biographies, indeed, and this one occupied two hefty volumes, have ever so buttered and salved their subjects.

* * *

As a young man, I wondered why the celebrated English critic, Arthur Bingham Walkley, whom I greatly respected and admired, seemed to like me, or at least was most hospitable to me while I was in England. Vain as I was, I concluded that it must be because of my critical writings which perhaps had made an impression on him. Unable longer to suppress my curiosity, I one day, while lunching with him in his pleasant cottage at Brightlingsea, edged cautiously toward a solution. "You are the only American," he explained to my crestfallen self, "I have met in some time whose voice hasn't been such as to knock most of the dishes off the table."

* * *

In my theatre collection, I prize an assortment of memorabilia bequeathed to me by the late Billy Watson of burlesque Beef Trust fame, including photographs of the original

female pachyderms and the original which enriched burlesque for years
“ponies.” Now, if whoever was the will bequeath it to me, my happiness
author of the famous spittoon skit will be complete.

REDBIRD BLUES

BY VINCENT McHUGH

Walkin in the cold towns sleepin in them hard cold jails
Walkin in the cold towns sleepin in them hard cold jails
Didn't shoot nobody didn't rob the U. S. mails

Says Mister Joe Mister Joe you goan be in a long long time
Better git yore toothbrush Mister Joe cause you goan be in
a long long time
You better ease your body an compose your mind

Redbirds-an-bluebells cryin an kickin on the floor
Lawd! Redbirds-an-bluebells cryin an kickin on the floor
Says fire in here Cap'n but they wouldn't open the door

You can walk nine steps an walk nine more steps back
Yes! Walk nine steps an walk nine more steps back
Walk nine days go from here to Hackensack

Says the trouble with you is you ain got no friends
The trouble with you is you ain got no friends
Says trouble is your friend an the trouble never ends

MOONSHINING IS ON THE RAMPAGE

BY IRWIN ROSS

THE black coupé raced down the road at 100 miles an hour. Behind came a police car, siren wailing. Suddenly the coupé swerved to the edge of the road, made a U-turn, and sped back in the direction from which it had come. By the time the police car had turned, its quarry was a mile away.

In the mountain country of western Virginia, a U-turn at full speed is known as a De Luxe Turnaround. Its execution demands rare courage and split-second timing. The driver throws the car into a skid, applies the emergency brake ever so lightly, then suddenly twists the steering wheel full circle and jams down on the accelerator. If properly done the car spins around. If improperly done it turns over.

These acrobatics are a regular occurrence on the mountain roads of our Southeastern states. Once again, the police are giving chase to their old adversaries—bootleggers! For the bootlegger is really back in business. Moonshine stills by the thousand

infest the Southern countryside; every night, huge quantities of “white lightning” are sped over the back roads to the city markets. During the fiscal year ending June 1950 the Treasury Department’s Alcohol Tax Unit seized about 10,000 illegal stills, arrested some 10,000 persons. This amounts to a 25 per cent increase in still seizures over 1949. Since 1946, still seizures have jumped 51 per cent.

The upsurge in moonshining is, in large part, a matter of simple economics. Legal whisky carries \$9 a gallon federal tax. With state and local levies added, more than \$.50 of the consumer’s liquor dollar goes for taxes. This margin provides a sizable incentive to the illegal distiller. The moonshiner has long had this tax advantage, but during the war sugar rationing and shortages curbed his activities. Once these restrictions ended, moonshining was ready for its profitable postwar spree.

Bootlegging has expanded somewhat in the North but the current boom is chiefly in the South. There

IRWIN ROSS is a free-lance writer whose *Strategy for Liberals* was published in 1949 by Harper. His previous MERCURY article, “Dr. Bunche of the UN,” appeared in April 1950.

the market for moonshine is immense. Low incomes mean a great demand for cheap spirits — and a pint of moonshine can often be bought for \$1. Moreover, millions of Southerners have an irrepressible taste for the bootleg stuff — variously known as “white mule,” “popskull,” and “sugarhead.” Its admirers claim it has “the real mule kick” whereas “store likker” hardly tickles their tonsils. Actually, moonshine, a colorless liquid bottled without benefit of any aging, has no greater alcoholic content than legal whisky, but it gives the impression of greater potency because of its raw, fiery taste. It is preferred, as well, because of a profound distrust, among the more unlettered customers, of all legal whisky. “That store stuff,” one old farmer told me, “never knewed a still. It’s made of chemicals and dyes — can be mighty poisonous.”

Recently I made an extended tour of the Southeastern moonshine country. The area is a curious back alley of American crime, where convicted felons are pillars of the community. A stretch in jail is regarded as a misfortune, but no disgrace. Though they wouldn’t violate any other laws, an amazing number of citizens engage in the illicit liquor traffic. One day I drove through the flat swamp land outside Norfolk, Va., with Tom Casey, head of the local Alcohol Tax

Unit; in the space of a mile he indicated two dozen homes, barns, grocery stores that were owned by current or former bootleggers. He called most of the former bootleggers “retired”; only one or two did he characterize as “reformed.”

In certain communities — part of Wilkes County, North Carolina, sections of Franklin and Patrick Counties in Virginia, among others — the entire economy is dependent on moonshining. The farmers raise a little food for their own consumption, but illegal whisky is the only sizable cash crop.

A still can be set up for as little as \$100. All you need are several barrels, a discarded oil drum, copper tubing, a condensing coil, some yeast, some grain and perhaps 500 pounds of sugar. The mash — made of sugar, grain and water — ferments in the barrels, is then cooked in the oil drum, and the vapors condensed in the coil.

Depending on the size of his plant, a distiller can make between \$100 and \$1000 a week. The “transporter,” who buys the liquor and speeds it to market by car, is good for \$1000 to \$1500 a week, if he works every night. The wholesaler in the city will average between \$500 and \$1000 a week, and a fair-sized retailer about \$300.

Moonshining is generally a family business, the oldsters training the young in the mysteries of the craft. A family of Patrick County, Virginia,

typifies the patriarchal set-up. Old John, who died in his eighties a few years ago, spent the better part of his life manufacturing moonshine. When each of his sons, and later his grandsons, became old enough, old John would take him by the hand, walk him up the side of the mountain and display his birthright — the family still. John had nineteen sons and innumerable grandsons, most of whom followed him into the business. Time and the afflictions of the law have gradually taken their toll: to date, 21 of them have been convicted of liquor violations, some individuals as many as six times. Yet the family manfully carries on its tradition.

II

In the moonshine country, arrests are regarded as an occupational hazard. When a man goes to jail the neighbors look after his family. Over the years the favor is reciprocated — for every moonshining family has a jailbird or two. The local courts often tend to regard moonshiners with genial benevolence. One judge regularly gave his defendants stiff sentences during the morning — in order to make a large splash in the afternoon papers. In the afternoon, however, he would call the men back and suspend their jail terms.

Moonshiners and Federal men bat-

tle each other with fierce determination, and yet a strange amiability exists between them. A few years ago Jimmy Moore, the veteran of the Martinsville, Va., ATU office, caught an aged, tattered fellow who admitted he was 86. Once nabbed, the moonshiner lowered himself wearily onto a tree stump. "Well, Jimmy," he said, "it's been well-nigh seventeen years — and I've always managed to stay 300 yards ahead of you. Now I guess it's your turn." And the two of them sat out in the woods for an hour, reminiscing about old times.

An informal code regulates relations between moonshiner and revenue officer. The revenooer must never abuse a prisoner, never seem vindictive about getting a conviction, and never lie on the witness stand. If he is businesslike in manner, no one holds his zeal against him. The moonshiner must also abide by certain well-defined rules. Thus, it is an honorable tactic, if he finds the officer's car near his still, to cut his tires — that will prevent pursuit, but not endanger the officer's life. On the other hand, it is distinctly unsporting to lay down a smokescreen through his exhaust pipe, a device employed by gangsters during prohibition — with devastating results to the Federal men. Above all, the moonshiner is supposed to be a man of his word. When he is captured on a still raid it is

not unusual for the ATU men to dispense with handcuffs and even with jailing their prisoner overnight. Instead, if they know him, they arrange to meet him the following day in the U. S. Commissioner's office for a hearing. And the prisoner invariably appears at the appointed hour.

Certain proprieties are also observed in a still raid. One raider approaches the still down the regular path, while the others scatter in the surrounding bushes. In the surprise of the raid, the man coming down the path expects to nab one or two operators — and flush the rest. They generally make a run for it — and the revenooers take up the chase — which sometimes continues for two or three miles over the countryside. The raiders are of course armed, but Treasury regulations forbid them to unsheath their weapons unless their lives are endangered — which is seldom. Thus, a moonshiner can hightail it through the woods with full confidence that he won't be plugged in the back. Moreover, when he is caught, he stays caught. It's like playing a game of tag. The rules forbid him to run again. Of course, in every county there are certain "mean" characters who don't abide by the rules. Over the years, scores of ATU men have been shot, knifed, or run down by motor vehicles. However, the vast majority of revenooers live to a hardy old age.

By far the most dangerous part of their business is catching the transporters. These young men are demon drivers. Eighty or so miles per hour is their normal speed over the narrow country roads; if they are chased, they can do better. The more intrepid keep their lights off when the moon is out. If they meet a road block, they swerve into a ditch, ride up a bank, or cut across an open field.

Not long ago, the North Carolina state police erected an elaborate road block to catch an elusive transporter. They placed two cars across a narrow road in such a fashion that their rear ends blocked both ditches and their front ends barricaded all but four feet of the paved road. When the transporter hove into view and saw the road block, he lacked enough distance for a quick U-turn. So he picked up speed and crashed through the two police cars, slicing off their hoods. And kept right on going!

On a straight road the transporters can usually outrun any police car. For they lavish large sums of money and infinite care on their vehicles. The prized car in the moonshine country is a 1940 Ford coupé; because of its weight distribution, with 125 gallons of whisky in the rear compartment, it hugs the road and is easily maneuverable. The transporters scour the countryside for the Fords. Charles S. Nicholson, head of the

Martinsville, Va., ATU office, has found some that come from as far north as Vermont. These days the cars bring \$800, far above their normal market value; in 1946 and 1947 the coupés fetched as high as \$2000.

Up to quite recently, the regular Ford motors would be retained, hopped up with superchargers, and multiple carburetors. They were then capable of 100 miles per hour. But when the police cars approached this figure, the transporters began replacing the old motors with Offenhauser engines, which are made for racing cars. With an Offenhauser, worth about \$1200 when assembled by a local mechanic, the Fords can do 125 miles per hour on a straight stretch.

It is difficult to catch these cars — not alone because of their speed. The transporters are crafty. Often they have another car reconnoiter the road before starting their runs; if a police car is found in the neighborhood, they change their route. They shift license plates frequently. Moreover, they have sensitive ears. In the dark, around their loading points, they can often detect the individual officers' cars by the sound of their motors!

The nabbing of "Jaybird" Phillpott is an epic. Three police cars blocked his path on a narrow road. Jaybird whipped around, headed back in the direction from whence he had

come. Suddenly, two other cars appeared from nowhere — racing down both sides of the road straight at him. There was only one way now to avoid capture, and Jaybird did not hesitate. He plunged into the ditch beside the road, opened the motor full throttle. Then, to his utter amazement, one of the police cars also plunged into the ditch and kept coming at him. The two cars smashed into each other, and Jaybird, unscathed, was finally caught. The policeman, miraculously, also escaped injury.

III

Less danger, and more ingenuity, is involved in running down the moonshine stills. If a still is located out in the woods, it is usually blanketed with wire netting, over which is strewn freshly cut branches and leaves. Sometimes army camouflage cloth is used. In the Baltimore region, Federal men uncovered a large still that boasted a retractable smokestack — which was only raised for night operations — and an alarm system: along the narrow roads, tin cans were fastened to the brush to rattle if an intruder appeared.

A major problem for the moonshiner is disguising the odor of his still. The unmistakable dank, sour smell of fermenting mash can be detected from a distance of several hundred yards. In cities, stills are

often located next to bakeries and meat markets, both of which serve as useful deodorants. In the country, proximity to a fertilizer plant is regarded as a choice location.

Patrols are only a small part of the revenooers' work. Coast guard planes are frequently used to spot stills. Twice a year — in autumn and early spring when the trees are leafless — the planes scour the countryside. One mountaineer officer is so adept at this work that he once went aloft for an hour, flew over a wide area and located 40 stills. Then the raiding parties took off. A Coast guard plane was recently used for 60 days to locate still sites in Georgia, South Carolina, Alabama and Florida. The operation was a huge success: 180 stills, 86,795 gallons of mash and 9290 gallons of liquor seized, 15 persons arrested.

Revenooers frequently work up a case from reports on raw materials such as sugar, yeast, corn meal and so on. By watching these items, it is possible to discover, say, a sudden jump in the consumption of sugar in a certain locality and thus to know where to look for another cluster of stills. A Virginia ATU office received a phone call from a man who had just recovered a stolen scow. From the remains of sugar and yeast left on the craft, he suspected that it had been used by moonshiners. For days, the ATU men scoured the swamp land

where the scow had been found, finally located a still. Its boiler burned coke. On the hunch that the coke supplier might be involved in moonshine operations, each supply house in town was put under surveillance. The culprit was soon revealed, for at one establishment several dozen bags of coke were left on the loading platform each night. They were always picked up before morning by two or three different trucks — which pointed to the operation of several other undetected stills. On successive nights, the trucks were tailed to their destinations. In this way, three other stills were located.

Sometimes, however, not even the most strenuous efforts of the revenooers can scotch a persistent violator. There was, for example, the fabulous case of one "Mary Jones." She was arrested a few years ago in Mississippi on a charge of possession and sale of nontax-paid liquor. Because of her great size — she weighed 550 pounds — the cops allowed her to remain at home. She failed, however, to appear in court for arraignment, and the U. S. Attorney told the judge she couldn't enter an auto, train or bus and that even private truckers had refused to move her. The judge insisted that she appear, and he prevailed upon the Army Engineers to furnish a large truck. The soldiers went to her home in Greenville,

hauled Mrs. Jones — atop a bed — into the vehicle and transported her 100 miles to the rear loading platform of the Federal Building at Vicksburg. A half dozen men were required to get her onto the freight elevator and roll her to the court room. They then discovered that they couldn't get her through the door.

Advised of this impasse — and the fact that Mrs. Jones, a persistent offender, considered herself immune to punishment because of her bulk — the judge walked to the court room door and sentenced her to two years in a Federal reformatory. She was shipped to Alderson, W. Va., in a baggage car, hauled to the prison by truck. She served her term, and

shortly after her release was again arrested on a charge of bootlegging. This time, however, the Federal Bureau of Prisons requested that she not be confided to their care. State doctors declared her sane, but the problem of jailing Mrs. Jones remained unsolved.

Eradicating moonshining is equally difficult. Some moonshiners trace their ancestry back to the hardy farmers who defied the Government in the Whisky Rebellion of 1794. They feel they are perpetuating one of the oldest traditions of American freemen. As one intrepid operator put it, "We'll continue makin' whisky even if the revenooers bring radar into them hills!"

THE NEAR PATCH

BY SOPHIE HIMMELL

"The yonder patch is seeded to nasturtium,"
He said. "I've planted sassafras close by."
We came to purchase his old house to live in,
He was selling to go somewhere to die.

Birds circled him, while he, the trader, spun
Word galaxies of marigold and phlox,
Praised sorrel-preservation for top soil,
Framed periwinkles in a window box.

Gazing to where a bleeding heart had edged
A child's grave shaded by an elm, he let
Time slip away in silence. Then he turned and said,
"I've seeded the near patch to mignonette."

THE BUTCHERBIRDS

A STORY

BY ESTHER PATT

I WAS just a kid when I first saw her. The iceman had been by and I was sucking ice through a washcloth. The coldness was much pleasanter than candy and imagined sweetness tasted better than any other.

I first noticed the ball fringe bobbing along her horse's side while it beat the brick with its shoe and flexed poor muscles under the fly net. The movement, complete with fanning of the tail, fascinated me and I sucked deep into the cold and watched the ball fringe and the horse.

The horse was fixed to a wagon full of dewberries. Up on the seat, still as a robin on a nest, *she* was. "Hello," I said. Her hair was looped well above her ears before it hid under the undecided brim, but perhaps she hadn't heard me. I tried again. "Hi—" I said. There weren't any kids to play with and I was ready to talk to anyone.

There wasn't any sound except the lurching of the wagon—a rebound of the efforts of the horse.

"My name's Marnie," I said. "I used to have a brother, but he's dead. He died before I was born. His name was Elvis. Do you have a brother?"

My mother called me then, but I didn't go until I was sure she wasn't going to answer. Deciding she was deaf, I went on home. At our gate—the third down—I met a man coming out. He looked so mean I turned to watch him and he went straight to the wagon. My mother was on the porch.

"Who was that?" I said.

"A huckster," she said.

I saw her every once in awhile, after that, but it was always the same. She took no notice of me whatever, and certain she couldn't hear me, it was easy saying anything I wished to her. It gave me satisfaction I had lost with dolls and I pretended she talked back to me. She sat quiet—holding onto the reins. I don't think she even ever sneezed or coughed. Through the weeks the load shifted from berries to peas and potatoes and the like, but

ESTHER PATT'S first published story, "The Espalier," appeared in the MERCURY for May 1950. She is an underwriter for an indemnity company in Kansas City.

if her clothes varied I never noticed. I never saw her without her hat, with all of its black and bygone elegance.

I was careful not to talk to her when there were passersby. Somehow I knew it might not be understood and if it got back to my mother, it might even be unpleasant. Maybe if there had been kids in the neighborhood, it would have been different.

Once when I was in the drugstore, Mr. Farrow who ran it said, "Saw you talkin' to Quare Beanblossom. What did Quare have to say?" His face wasn't big enough to hold his grin, and the bow tie twitched under pressure of the laugh that waited for my answer. I snatched my mother's medicine from off the counter and ran for the door, and the laughter rolled along the boards burning my bare heels in its fire. "Wouldn't want folks to think *you* was quare, too — would you?" he called after me.

I ran home fast, but the question chased me all the way. I put the powders on the kitchen cabinet and ran out to the boxwoods. There was a place there where they made a kind of square, and when I squatted on my knees no one could see. There against the stiffness I cried harder than a ten-year-old should know how. My folks were from north of the Ridge, and we always noticed when people said things like *hoose* for house and

quare for queer, but I didn't know the words were wrong.

Next time I saw her I didn't say anything at all. I just sat a little ways apart and looked at her. She didn't seem to notice, but I still stood up for her, deciding she wasn't only deaf, but blind. That word *quare* would wedge into my chest and make it hard to breathe.

II

One evening before supper was when it happened. I guess my mother was in the kitchen — anyway she didn't see me. I was playing jacks — trying to keep the ball from bouncing between bricks. I looked up and there *she* was, motioning from on the wagon. I remember dabbing at my eyes with my wad of handkerchief, trying to rub off the imagining, but the jacks hurt squeezing into my hand and I knew I wasn't sleeping. I got up and went over to the wagon.

It was the first time she had ever looked at me. *Into* — more than at me. Since I'm grown, I recognize it for the look of those with knowing — a kind of fusing. She said, "Get in the wagon."

It didn't come to me to ask where we were going. I just climbed up onto the seat. She kept looking at my house until we turned the corner into Churning road which wasn't paved. The mood had got into the horse,

and its quick beats muffled by the dust were like the poundings in my neck. Even the trees were allies, and for the first time I felt a part of everything I saw — as though everything breathed together for excitement. We were flying — the horse kept trotting, I know — but we were flying. She didn't say any more — but it didn't matter when you were flying.

We left Churning road for another — might even have left the whole state of Virginia for a state of happiness. I shared no sense of space or time but, looking back, we could perhaps have gone five or six miles. My spine bent to the right for the curves to the south and to the left for those that sloped into the woods. It was cooler, but the sun still had a long ways to drop. When our pacing slowed to meet a curve, I heard her voice close by my ear. "Do you know who I am?" she said.

My breath was sucked away in waves that left me drowned in silence. I couldn't say her name to *her*. "No, ma'am —" I said. My eyes flooded with the lie, and I wanted to beg her not to tell me who she was. "I'm Quivera Baneblaus," she said.

How *beautiful* a name — *Quivera!* *Mr. Farrow was a liar*, I thought.

She took off her hat and dropped it in the emptiness back of the seat, and I saw her hair braided to a crown on top her head. She wasn't pretty —

not the way women were supposed to be — but she had — she had projection. She was a silent sort of spokesman for — the road — the trees — the horse — and she was — really beautiful. I didn't think it through — I only felt it with the tasting edge of any child that age.

"The first time you seen me," she said, "you asked have I a brother. I got one — he should have died before my time."

"Brothers is supposed to be fun," I said.

"Sometimes things is different from what they's supposed to be," she said, "and sometimes things oughtn't be the way they is."

We kept on going and I tried to figure out how things were like she said, but the more I thought the harder it got, till I forgot what it was she said.

"I thought you was deaf," I said. She didn't say *anything* to that. "I thought you was blind, too —" I said.

We pulled away from the road into a place where rocks had spread so long before that they were dyed with damp, and moss and reddish earth. The horse shuddered and wouldn't go ahead, and I wondered if it saw the mill. It was a stooping mill with empty stares. I had to grab the seat then, till she could hold the horse.

"Mares is like most women," she said. "They don't hold with snakes."

I saw it then. I thought I was going to be sick, but I only sat there — watching the writhing and the thrashing in the air. Hanging by the neck — a snake — on a thorn tree that was strung with dead snakes hanging there like ropes from spikes along the limbs. It made such vivid motion — such green and boneless efforts — and the hooking of its tail — piercing just the air —

I felt a solid tube explore my throat and gagged with such a force that she held me then, and I felt safer in her nearness even though she fought quick breathing. She held the mare to flinching, and the three of us were — all of life — all life — watching all of death.

"*It's ugly*," I said, pushing close against her.

"They's pretty, gentle grass snakes. Likes to play, they do — in the clear-in's and the marshes same as you. And they don't never bite," she said. "It's a sorry sight — a sorry, sorry sight."

I leaned hard against the safeness that was her and looked again. I was very tired — but the sureness in her voice helped me see the things, perhaps the way they should be seen. All movement gone, they hung alike.

I counted — there were 21. Some were shriveled — dry, and even black; and some were brown like grass, but mostly they were bright and green.

I looked back at the mill, to see if it was there, I guess, and saw two dead snakes in another tree, and a mouse — its head was gone.

"Yes," she said, "they's all around."

Back of us were four more — even closer — and a lizard. Stuck, they were — all stuck right through the necks. My legs felt bruised — as though I'd tried to run and couldn't.

"How'd they get there?" I said.

"Butcherbirds," she said.

I'd never heard of butcherbirds, and didn't know what they were. "I *hate* them!" I said, very loud. "*Hate them — hate them —*"

I got hot and sick and started coughing — spitting up. She put the firm coolness of her hand on my forehead and wiped the sweat away, and she wiped the sickness off my dress with her petticoat. I looked back at the mill, expecting birds to fly out blackened windowholes and kill me in the dimness that was beginning evening. The wagon lurched and I cried out, but it was only that the mare was reaching grass. *She* held me close, and rocked me.

"We cain't hate butcherbirds," she said, "'cause butcherbirds ain't bad. It's a sorry sight — the snakes, it is — but it ain't bad of the butchers. It's their way," she said. She rocked me, easy. "They's just like folks, they is — and so's the snakes."

"I broke my leg and set it once,

and I had to pull and hoist. I learned respectin' for the snakes. They have a thrustin' way, and they thrust up or downhill without legs or tryin'. They love their mates, and they chin their pretty backs to tell 'em so. I *know*" she said, "I *watch* 'em."

I loved her then, I think. Loved her way — and was awed by all she knew. I'd never compared animals with people, and so I was ashamed, even of mashed ant hills and all my jars of fireflies. "Tell me about butcherbirds," I said.

She looked all around, and up into the trees — and over by the mill. I followed, clinging with my eyes to her line of power — stretching along the rope that was her vision — aiming safely — knowing that our eyes held hands, exploring forests of the leaves that were the parent trees of those small ones strung with death. But these were all we saw. "The butcher's gone," she said. "He's a *chubby* one — got a hook-beak like lots of folks." She stopped talking, and just sat.

"Why does he do like what he does?" I remember asking.

"He has weak-like feet," she said, "and sticks his meat up so's he won't need hold it while he eats. Sometimes he's a-flyin' back — but mostly he goes off butcherin' again." She shook her head. "Killin' is a sorry way," she said. She looked at me — and all sadness looked — and darkness came and

took the day away. I felt the sureness of her hand lift reins from off the whip hook, and I heard wheels turning on the rocks — and so I knew we'd left the snakes.

III

The road we came was different going back — and so was I. Maybe I discovered then that wonder rides at night along with love — and growth — or maybe that the things I saw by day I felt by night. *She*, herself, was boundless, and I warmed against her — limp — content to doze and share the slight and rhythmic movement that was life. I think we took the very pulse of night — pounding in the creekbed through the frog that felt it on his belly. I think we were the breathing core of everything that was.

The mare had knowing feet, and seemed to be familiar with flight into the night. I slept against Quivera, and woke only when we stopped. It was so cold — sitting up away from her.

"You're goin' to have some supper before I take you home," she said. "If *he* ain't here, you are."

"If who ain't here?" I said.

She pulled up to a door and didn't answer. There were dark *things* in the yard around the house, but I couldn't see just what they were.

"Wait," she said.

I sat there in the wagon, sleepy —

chilling — while she went inside. She limped easily — or perhaps it was a rhythm of her own. I saw a lamp go by a window to another — then back again — and she held it at the door.

“Come, child,” she said. The words were quiet, as though fearful of waking up the night. I climbed down, past the dark arm of a pump. There was a cat behind electric eyes. I was going to pick it up, but it went squirming underneath the house. She put down the lamp and motioned me to sit. My dress smelled, there inside the house. I didn’t want to sit up to the table. She came — unbuttoned it down the back — slipping it off my head — and I sat in my petticoat. She had a listening eye —

“What you listenin’ for?” I said.

“The butcherbird,” she said.

I thought that she was fooling me, and so I grinned. “What butcherbird?” I said. I let my voice coast down the hill to show I knew a joke.

“My brother,” she said. She told it simply, and I knew it for a truth. At least I knew she meant it — and there was nothing more to say.

She lit another lamp and turned the wick up high. “Preserves,” she said. “You like — strawberry?”

“Oh, yes,” I said. Quickly I was very hungry.

“Come with me,” she said. “We’ll get you some.”

We went out again into the night.

Her very touch had turned the lamp into a giant firefly breathing flame inside its tummy. It showed us to a mound of ground — such a swollen, rounding grave with a wooden door that moaned and lay there still and quiet when we dropped it on its side. Down along decaying stairs I hugged my arms to hide my bareness from the eyes that were reflected lamps in jars of fruits and jellies. It seemed to me they stared from out of a deep sleep.

She handed me a pail to carry, and a jar. She took a crock, and took the lamp back from its watch there on the floor, and we went up and out into the night — and back into the house.

The butter from the crock was sweet and sweating on the bread, and the berry juice ran pink veins in between. The milk was thick with cream, and cool. I hadn’t known I was so hungry — and yet I swallowed fear with every bite. *She* — the heroine of all my life — who knew the snakes and dark — *she* was limping to the window — peering out — listening at the door —

“If *he* comes,” she said, “go quiet to the wagon.”

When she filled the mug again with milk, I saw the trembling of the pail. Silence cowered in the corners, and I knew it for a house that never laughed — but then I hadn’t known a house that had. A cat explored the cold

stove in the corner, and *she* was watching me.

I said, "Ain't you hungry?"

She moved the soaking berries closer to my plate. "They's a different kind of hungry," she said, "an' that's the kind I am."

"Ain't you goin' to eat?" I said.

She smiled. I thought maybe she was pulling jokes, and so I grinned. She was *very* pretty then — even like women were supposed to be.

"How come about your brother?" I said.

"It's that he can't help bein' what he is," she said.

The quiet became great clattering. She was quick to stand in front of me, and I could only see the folds and folds that were her skirt. The cat came darting by — pushing on my legs like bony knuckles in a glove. Quivera picked the empty pans up off the floor and put them back — up on the stove, and when she turned, I saw the fear.

"I was thinkin' it was *him*," she said. She held my dress for me and I climbed in, not breathing till my head was out — and she listened at the door — and then we slipped out to the wagon.

IV

It was there we knew the safeness. Settled there against her, I wanted nothing else. Just to ride — to ride —

and be forever with her — there. Once again we went, bending to the right and to the left — and the moon had such a long, long climb to make — but going back was shortest, and even when I shoved the town clear with my carried feet, I knew the mare would win. And so, like this, I saw the end of Churning road.

Drawing to the side, she pulled up on the reins. I didn't want to go back home — I didn't want to *leave* her — but that was all there was to do. She held her hand against my cheek. "The day when you'll be hurt — will be a *sorry* day," she said. "Remember then, that butcherbirds cain't help bein' what they is."

It was the *loving* in her that made me want to cry. She kissed my cheek. I knew that she expected me to go. I lingered though, after I was finally down — and waved until I couldn't hear the hoofing of the mare — and then I went three houses down, and started up the walk to squares of light that were my house.

I could hear my father. He was almost shouting. There was a bursting in my chest like too much running — and I had to go to the bathroom. The screen was hooked. I rattled the little white knob.

My father came. He came to the door with his shirt off, frowning at the dark. When he passed the lamp the

light came through all the hair on his chest and made it glisten. There were red marks just below his neck where he had rubbed, and he was rolling fingers the way I hated. He flipped the hook on the door.

"Where've you been?" he said. He grabbed my shoulders and shook me hard. "It's late!" he said. "Where've you been?" My mother came in from the kitchen with a powder in her hand and a glass of water.

"Shut up," she said. "The neighbors can hear you!"

"I don't give a God damn," my father said.

My mother unfolded the wrapper like chewing gum and dumped the powder in the water. She shook it in a careful circle and drank it all. She set the glass down on the table and belched. There was a moth flying around, batting the sides of the glass shade over the dining table. She looked at the moth and kept belching three or four times. When she was through she said, "Tell your father where you was."

I couldn't tell them — I *couldn't*. They wouldn't understand. I stood there looking at the moth, and the walls moved in around me — only they weren't walls. They were just remembered walls that I used to know, and they didn't matter. When

I looked at them closer, I saw the gold between the roses was all tarnished, and I knew I'd been gone a long, long time. "I want to go to bed," I said.

My mother was looking at my dress. "What's that?" she said, pointing to where I had been sick.

"I got sick," I said.

"You got sick —" she said. "You got sick. *I'm always* sick — and you make me sicker when you don't show up for supper."

I started to my room — but she stopped me.

"Where was you?"

"I was riding with the huckster-woman," I said miserably.

"That *goofy* woman?" my mother said. "You went riding with that *nitwit* — in that wormy wagon?"

"She's *not* goofy —" I yelled. "She's *not* a nitwit." I was shaking all over, like the mare when it saw the snake. "*Not half as goofy as you are* —" I said.

My father was stocky, and my mother would have been, if she hadn't had an ulcer. They just stood there, looking — and then my father hit the side of my head with his hand.

"Don't you talk that way to your mother," he shouted.

I wanted to run away, but there was no place to run to but my room, so I ran there.

HATRACK

BY HERBERT ASBURY

WHEN I was a boy in Farmington, Missouri, it was the custom of our pastors and pious brethren, and of the professional devil-chasers who were imported as reinforcements from time to time, to proclaim loudly and incessantly that our collective morals were compounded of a slice of Sodom and a cut of Gomorrah, with an extract of Babylon to flavor the stew. They worried constantly and fretfully over our amorous activities; they regarded every man except the very aged and decrepit as a potential seducer, and every young girl as a prospective daughter of sin, whose salvation depended almost entirely upon the volume of noise they themselves could make.

In their more feverish discourses appeared significant references to the

great difficulty of remaining pure, and in effect they advised our young women to go armed to the teeth, prepared to do battle in defense of their virginity. These gloomy predictions of the inevitability of seduction naturally had a tremendous effect upon young minds; very likely it was after she had heard the ravings of such an evangelist that the little girl of the fable, requested by her teacher to define a virgin, replied, "A female person under five years of age."

In all the small towns of the Middle West this sort of thing was the principal stock in trade of those who would lead their brethren to the worship of the current God. I do not recall ever having heard an evangelist, whether professional or amateur, who did not assure his hearers that their town was

HERBERT ASBURY leaped into the national spotlight literally overnight with the appearance of "Hatrack," which the New England Watch and Ward Society and other bluenoses denounced as "salacious." For a time they managed to have that issue of THE AMERICAN MERCURY barred from public sale and banned from the mails. The editor personally went to Boston and had himself arrested, as a test case, on Boston Common for selling the issue. There ensued a long series of litigations, during which "Hatrack" achieved a popularity probably unequalled in the history of periodical journalism. The article may appear somewhat tame now, but that is only because the public attitude toward "salacious" literature has matured — a maturity for which the crusading of the MERCURY is in large part responsible. The article, which first appeared in April 1926, is one of a series of occasional MERCURY reprints.

overrun by harlots, and that brothels abounded in which leading citizens abandoned themselves to shameful orgies while church attendance dwindled, and collections became smaller and smaller, and chicken appeared less and less frequently upon the ministerial table. Their tirades were generally in this fashion:

Shall we permit these painted daughters of Jezebel, these bedizened hussies, to stalk the streets of this fair city and flaunt their sin in the face of the Lord? Shall we permit them to lure our sons and brothers into their vile haunts and ply their nefarious trade in the very shadow of the House of God? No! I say NO! Jesus Christ must live in this town!

Immediately everyone shouted, "Amen, Brother!" and "Praise the Lord!" But it was sometimes difficult to determine whether the congregation praised the Lord for inspiring the evangelist to so courageously defy the harlots, or for permitting him to discover them. If the Man of God could find them, why not the damned too? Certainly there were always many who wondered if the brother had acquired any good addresses or telephone numbers since coming to town. Not infrequently, indeed, he was stealthily shadowed home by young men eager to settle that question.

These charges and denunciations

were repeated by the evangelist at the meetings for men only, which were always a most interesting feature of the revivals. At similar gatherings for women, or ladies, as we called them in small town journalism, his wife or a devout sister discussed the question from the feminine viewpoint. What went on at these latter conclaves I do not know, though I can guess, for I have often seen young girls coming out of them giggling and blushing. The meetings for men only were juicy indeed. The evangelist discussed all angles of the subject, and in a very free manner. His own amorous exploits before he became converted were recited in considerable detail, and he painted vivid word pictures of the brothels he had visited, both as a paying client and in the course of his holy work. Almost invariably they were subterranean palaces hung with silks and satins, with soft rugs upon the floor, and filled with a vast multitude of handsome young women, all as loose as ashes. Having thus intimated, with some smirking, that for many years he was almost the sole support of harlotry, he became confidential. He leaned forward and said:

"There are such Dens of the Devil right here in your town!"

This was first-class information, and immediately there was a stir in the audience, many of his hearers betraying an eagerness to be gone. But be-

fore they could get away the evangelist thundered:

"Shall we permit them to continue their wicked practices?"

I always hoped to be present some day when the audience forgot itself and answered that question with the reply that was so plainly in its mind, namely, "Yes!" But alas, I never heard it, although there was much shouting of "Amen!" and "Glory to God!" These meetings for men only were generally held in the afternoon, and their net result was that the business of the drugstore increased immediately, and when night fell bands of young good-for-nothings scurried hither and yon about the town, searching feverishly for the Dens of the Devil. They searched without fear, confident that modern science would save them from any untoward consequences, and knowing that no matter what they did they would go to heaven if they permitted a minister to intercede for them in the end, or a priest to oil them with holy unguents.

But the Dens of the Devil were not found, neither in Farmington nor in any other small town in that region, for the very good reason that they did not exist. The evangelist did not know what he was talking about; he was simply using stock blather that he had found by experience would excite the weak-minded to both sexual and religious emotions, which are very

similar. He knew that when they were thus upset they would be less likely to question his ravings — that they would be more pliable in his hands and easier to convert. It is, in fact, well-nigh impossible to convert anyone who can keep his head and retain control of his emotions. Such a person is likely to giggle during the most solemn moments, and nothing is more destructive of evangelical fervor than a hearty giggle.

II

Our small towns were not overrun by harlots for the plain reason that harlotry could not flourish in a small town. It was economically impossible; there were not enough cash customers to make the scarlet career profitable. Also, the poor girls had to meet too much competition from emotional ladies who had the professional spirit but retained their amateur standing by various technicalities. And harlots, like the rest of us, had to live; they required the same sort of raiment and food that sufficed their virtuous sisters; it was not until they died that they wore nothing but the smoke of hell and were able to subsist on a diet of brimstone and sulphur.

Many men who in larger communities would have patronized the professionals could not do so in a small town. They could not afford to; it was too dangerous. The moment a woman

was suspected of being a harlot she was watched eagerly by everyone from the mayor down to the preachers, and the name of every man seen talking to her, or even looking at her, went winging swiftly from mouth to mouth, and was finally posted on the heavenly bulletin board as that of an immoral wretch. A house in which harlotry was practiced was picketed day and night by small boys eager to learn the forbidden mysteries, and by brethren and sisters hopefully sniffing. It was not possible for a harlot to keep her clientèle secret, for the sexual life of a small town is an open book, and news of amorous doings could not travel faster if each had a tabloid newspaper.

Exact statistics, of course, are not available, but it is probably true that no small American town has ever harbored a harlot whose professional income was sufficient to feed and clothe her. Few if any such towns have ever been the abode of more than one harlot at a time. When I was a boy every one had its own harlot, just as it had its town sot (this, of course, was before drunkards became extinct), and its town idiot. But she was generally a poor creature who was employed by day as a domestic servant and practiced her ancient art only in her hours of leisure. She turned to it partly for economic reasons, and partly because of a great yearning for

human companionship, which she could obtain in no other way. She remained in it because she was almost instantly branded a Daughter of Satan, and shunned by good and bad alike. She seldom, if ever, realized that she was doing wrong; her moral standards were those of a bedbug. She thought of harlotry in terms of new ribbons and an occasional pair of shoes, and in terms of social intercourse; she was unmoral rather than immoral, and the proceeds of her profession, to her, were just so much extra spending money.

Small town men who occasionally visited the larger cities, and there thought nothing of spending from ten to fifty dollars in metropolitan brothels, were very stingy in dealing with the town harlot. They considered a dollar an enormous price for her, and frequently they refused to give her anything. Many small communities were not able to support even a part-time harlot; consequently some members of the craft went from town to town, taking secular jobs and practicing harlotry as a side line until driven out by the godly or until the inevitable business depression occurred. I recall one who made several towns along the O. K. Railroad in North-eastern Missouri as regularly as the shoe drummers. Her studio was always an empty box car on the town siding, and she had a mania for in-

scribing in such cars the exact dates and hours of her adventures, and her honoraria. It was not unusual to find in a car some such inscription as this:

Ten P.M., July 8. Fifty cents.

These writings, scrawled in lead pencil or with a bit of chalk, were signed "Box Car Molly." Once, in a car from which I had unloaded many heavy bags of cement, I came across what seemed to be a choice bit of very early, and apparently authentic Box-Car-Molliana. On the wall was this:

I was ruined in this car May 10.

Box Car Molly

III

Our town harlot in Farmington was a scrawny creature called variously Fanny Fewclothes and Hatrack, but usually the latter in deference to her figure. When she stood with her arms outstretched she bore a remarkable resemblance to the tall hatracks then in general use in our homes, and since she was always most amiable and obliging, she was frequently asked to pose thus for the benefit of drummers and other infidels. In time, she came to take a considerable pride in this accomplishment; she referred to herself as a model, and talked vaguely of abandoning her wicked life and going to St. Louis, where she was sure she could make a living posing for artists.

Six days a week Hatrack was a

competent and more or less virtuous drudge employed by one of our best families, but Sunday was her day off, and she then, in turn, offered her soul to the Lord and went to the devil. For the latter purpose she utilized the Masonic and Catholic cemeteries, which were side by side, although their occupants presumably went to different heavens. Hatrack's regular Sunday night parade, her descent from righteousness to sin, was one of the most fascinating events of the week, and promptly after supper those of us who did not have engagements to take young ladies to church (which was practically equivalent to publishing the banns), went downtown to the loafing place in front of the Post Office and waited impatiently.

On week days Hatrack turned a deaf ear to the blandishments of our roués, but on Sunday night she was very gracious and receptive. This, however, was not until she had gone to church and had been given to understand, tacitly but none the less clearly, that there was no room for her in the Kingdom of Heaven. Our Sunday night services usually began about eight o'clock, following the meetings of the various young people's societies. At seven thirty, regardless of the weather, the angular figure of Hatrack could be discerned coming down the hill from the direc-

tion of the cemeteries. She lived somewhere in that section and worked by the day. She was always dressed in her best, and in her eyes was the light of a great resolve. She was going to church, and there was that in her walk and manner which said that thereafter she was going to lead a better life.

There was always a group of men waiting for her around the Post Office. But although several always muttered, "Here she comes!" it was not good form to speak to her then, and she walked past them as though she had not seen them. But they, with their wide knowledge of the vagaries of the agents of the Lord, grinned hopefully and settled down to wait. They knew she would be back. She went on up the street past the Court House and turned into the Northern Methodist Church, where she took a seat in the last row. All about her were empty seats; if they were not empty when she got there they were soon vacated. No one spoke to her. No one asked her to come to Jesus. No one held out a welcoming hand. No one prayed for her. No one offered her a hymn-book. At the protracted meetings and revivals, which she invariably attended, none of the brothers and sisters tried to convert her; she was a Scarlet Woman and belonged to the devil. There was no place for her in a respectable congre-

gation. They could not afford to be seen talking to her, even in church, where God's love, by their theory, made brothers and sisters of us all.

It was painful to watch her; she listened to the Word with such rapt attention; she sang the hymns with such fanatical fervor, and she plainly yearned for the comforts of that barbaric religion and the blessings of easy intercourse with decent people. But she never got them. From the Christians and their God she got nothing but scorn. Of all the sinners in our town Hatrack would have been the easiest to convert; she was so eager for salvation. If a preacher, or a brother, or a sister, had so much as spoken a kind word to her she would have dropped to her knees and given up her soul. And her conversion, in all likelihood, would have been permanent, for she was not mentally equipped for a struggle against the grandiose improbabilities of revealed religion. If someone had told her, as I was told, that God was an old man with long whiskers, she would not have called him "Daddy," as some of her more flippant city sisters might have done; she would have accepted Him and gloried in Him.

But she was not plucked from the burning, for the workers for the Lord would have nothing to do with her, and by the end of the service her eyes had grown sullen and her lip had

curled upward in a sneer. Before the final hymn was sung and the benediction pronounced upon the congregation she got to her feet and left the church. None tried to stop her; she was not wanted in the House of God. I have seen her sit alone and miserably unhappy while the preacher bellowed a sermon about forgiveness, with the whole church rocking to a chorus of "amens" as he told the stories of various Biblical harlots, and how God had forgiven them.

But for Hatrack there was no forgiveness. Mary Magdalene was a Saint in heaven, but Hatrack remained a harlot in Farmington. Every Sunday night for years she went through the same procedure. She was hopeful always that someone would speak to her and make a place for her, that the brothers and sisters who talked so volubly about the grace and the mercy of God would offer her some of the religion that they dripped so freely over everyone else in town. But they did not, and so she went back down the street to the Post Office, swishing her skirts and offering herself to all who desired her. The men who had been waiting for her, and who had known that she would

come, leered at her and hailed her with obscene speech and gesture. And she gave them back leer for leer, meeting their sallies with giggles, and motioning with her head toward the cemeteries.

And so she went up the hill. A little while later a man left the group, remarking that he must go home. He followed her. And a moment after that another left, and then another, until behind Hatrack was a line of men, about one to a block, who would not look at one another, and who looked sheepishly at the ground when they met anyone coming the other way. As each man accosted her in turn Hatrack inquired whether he was a Protestant or a Catholic. If he was a Protestant she took him into the Catholic cemetery; if he was a Catholic they went into the Masonic cemetery.

They paid her what they liked, or nothing, and she was grateful for whatever she received. It was Hatrack who made the remark that was famous in our town for many years. To a stranger who offered her a dollar she said:

"You know damned well I haven't got any change."



ADVENTURES IN DIET

BY JAMES & PETA FULLER

NO ONE can eat for you, but everyone tells you how and what to eat, and oftener, what to avoid. And you listen respectfully — which is a strange thing, because man, by nature, is fiercely opinionated about the food he wants and feels he needs. Yet his desires have always been hedged in by rituals, notions, scruples or — more recently — scientific theories.

The latest pretenders to the throne of dietetic authority are, of course, the Nutritionists. And their cause is noble. Nevertheless, after carefully studying the aims and claims of this new, dismal science, and of all the old ones, two guinea pigs rebelled. “Enough of theory-dictated prescriptions!” we said, and declared our gastronomical independence. At the end of our third year of defiance, we are still unrepentant.

Luckily, being free-lance workers, we had latitude in which to create our own design for eating. We left the faddists to their cramping fads and the guinea pigs to their medicinal munching and, in doing so, we

learned how to eat well *and with zest* on very little money. We became gourmets, of a sort, though ours is the *gourmandise* of the frayed collar classes. We tailored menus to fit our own wants and needs, and it turned out to be a joyous and amazing adventure — an adventure open to anyone willing to shed prejudice and inhibition. You have only to make up your mind that the best — in moderation — is good enough for you.

Our emancipation came about gradually. Half of the year we subsist in sedentary fashion in a New York City apartment, supported more or less by wits raddled by noise and city tensions; for the better half of the year we now live on a remote, though not unfriended Vermont hill farm where we are active hand and foot. To make the most of these two worlds, we felt the need of two almost completely different diets. Nutrition textbooks, unfortunately, shed about as much light on the problem as a Kinsey statistician on the art of love. Their recommendations are standard-

JAMES & PETA FULLER are free-lance writers whose last collaborative article for the *MERCURY*, “*The Other Side of the Wonder Drugs*,” appeared in the issue for October 1949.

ized for everybody, everywhere; therefore they apply to nobody. We weren't interested in avoiding pellagra, scurvy, rickets, anemia or hardening of the arteries. The least we might hope for would be high spirits, vigor, acute senses and nimble brains, together with the enjoyment of fine flavors and high quality food, which do add something to food values and health. But the scientists for the most part are silent on such important points. Clinical interest in the chemistry and mechanics of digestion rarely accompanies a genuine, creative interest in food. We felt sure, however, that mankind had not waited until the twentieth century to learn how to eat wisely.

Then, while reading in the public library one day, we ran across the history and writings of Luigi Cornaro, the willful, gifted son of a noble, sixteenth century Venetian family with a dozen Doges to its name. Repudiated by his betters, he lived high, wide and choleric until he was nearly forty, amassing in the process an alarming assortment of ailments — among them gout, fevers, and what read today like symptoms of diabetes.

In his thirty-ninth year, the physicians of Padua, where he then lived in exile, despaired of his life and withdrew (or Cornaro sent them packing — the record isn't clear). Then began one of history's most extraordinary

experiments in eating to live. Cornaro was defiant in the face of death; he took his own life in his hands to save it, and, turning his body into a laboratory, experimented rigorously with diet. "I chose only such wines and foods as agreed with my stomach," he said, "taking them only in such quantity as I knew I could easily digest. . . . In this way I accustomed myself to the habit of never fully satisfying my appetite — always leaving the table well able to take more."

But it was no milktoast and gruel diet that Cornaro devised. Self-discipline was one thing, grim asceticism quite another. He had every intention of enjoying life. In his once-famous book, *La Sobria Vita*, he set down a typical menu:

First bread; then soup or a light broth with an egg or some other nice little dish of this kind; of meats I eat veal, kid and mutton; I eat fowls of all kinds as well as partridges and birds like the thrush. I also partake of such salt water fish as the goldney; and among fresh water fish, the pike and others.

Cornaro limited himself only in quantity, *never* in quality, demanding the best of meat and wine. He considered wine to be "truly the milk of the aged," just as milk, which he never drank, "is the wine of the young."

Within a year Cornaro was rid of

all disease. His galloping spirits were restored and never again, during a long productive life, was his health anything less than glowing. The wastrel became the finest example of Renaissance man. Honored, popular, creative, he was the patron and inspired amateur of all the arts; Vasari, the Italian historian, praised him as "a man of great genius and truly regal spirit." He married late, diet having insured virility too, and in time had eleven grandchildren. He died, protesting that there was still work to finish, at the age of 103.

There indeed was a tested diet! We hadn't ever considered passing the century mark, but the concept of "a little of the best" as a basic rule sounded fine. We would adapt it in our own way, of course. Every man to his own digestion — Cornaro had been emphatic about that. What he recommended was a principle only: self-knowledge and discipline as a means of finding out what is the proper food for yourself and how much of it — for you — is temperate.

II

We put the Cornaro idea into effect at once in New York. Our emphasis, like his, was on *good* meat, *good* bread and *good* wine. It took a bit of research before we could fit the plan to our means. To be sure of high quality meat, for example, we had to learn

to distinguish at sight Government graded Good, Choice and Prime beef and to acquire the courage to contradict the clerk who argued "*All* our meat is choice." We had to find butchers who would provide unfrozen, un-"tenderized," undoctored cuts. In a large, cosmopolitan city decent bread is easier to come by. A few Italian bakers still pull an honest, brown shell from the oven which we can pick up warm and fragrant in our part of town around 5 P.M. There is *Chaleh*, the turbulent twists of egg bread sold in kosher shops on Fridays, and there are round, Syrian loaves clothed in a crust as flaky and rich with butter as a proper strudel. Oftener than not, however, we play it safe by baking our own bread, biscuits, cinnamon rolls and other home-spun delights.

At first we patriotically experimented with American wines, then, a little apologetically, settled for French and Italian vintages of good but inexpensive years. The difference in cost was negligible and was easily balanced by substituting a fair American sherry for the pre-prandial cocktail which we had found to be somehow out of key in our plan. For variety, we added egg dishes, sea foods and cheeses (*natural* cheeses) to the menus from time to time, and a soup or salad when appetite asked for them (which in winter, for us, is not often). With

these and forthright Italian-roast coffee, we dined and felt like gods. No vegetables — except as seasoning — no fruits, few salads, no sweets, and the Italian coffee brewed rich and fragrant from the dark beans, bought freshly-roasted, then finely ground at home. (A saving, too, incidentally, especially if two paper filters are used in the drip pot.)

Lunch, we presently found, was not only superfluous but slowed down the afternoon's work. So we skipped it. Breakfast continued to be, as always, a highly individualized affair — large, leisurely and conventional for the male; oftener than not exotic for his partner, who thinks morning is the time of times for lively flavors. Like the Chinese school child, she can start the day happily on *congee* — a rice soup made on a pork base. Thin slices of chicken or even fish are poached in it for added glory. Tabasco eggs turn up periodically on the breakfast table, and devilled kidneys in the best British tradition, or Italian pizza (made the easy way, however, with English muffins). Curry is all right, too, if there's some left over. And the perfect eye-opener when a celebration is legitimate is a small broiled Delmonico steak and corn bread.

Once our stomachs and imaginations grew accustomed to this seem-

ingly spare regimen, agreeable things began to happen. We never over-ate. "He who distinguishes the true savor of his food can never be a glutton," said Thoreau. Moreover, the two-meal plan noticeably heightened our perceptions. We felt more alert, had more time for work; and getting dinner, instead of being a chore, became more and more of an adventure. For with only one main dish to prepare we could easily afford the time for exploratory gastronomy. We achieved variety by eclectic cookery rather than a change of basic food-stuffs.

Our new techniques included charcoal broiling in the fireplace, bean-pot roasting, and "stir-frying" Chinese style. This last technique is the perfect method for cooking vegetables. The basic principle is to cook in *a little* fat (lard or drippings, but not vegetable shortening), revolving the ingredients *very* fast with a fork and spoon — we use chopsticks — over high heat for two to three minutes, or until each piece is well coated and shining. Then a marinade is quickly stirred in, consisting usually of one tablespoon of soya sauce, a shake of sugar (about half a teaspoon) one teaspoon sherry, minced garlic and, if possible a big teaspoon or more of minced fresh green ginger. Then a tight lid is clapped on and the heat turned *way down*. There should be no

peeking for six minutes. By then the vegetable should be cooked to perfection; tender, crisp, bright in color and lyrical in flavor.

We made a few blunders naturally, but no one could complain of monotony and there was seldom any resistance to the *pièce de résistance*. More striking, our tastes sharpened and changed in subtle ways. We began to like organ meats better, and to crave the fat as much as the lean, whether the dish happened to be Chinese "candyskin" roast chicken, barbecued spareribs, scallopini Marsala or *bouillabaisse*. We broiled our veal kidneys in jackets of their own fat and wondered why we had ever liked them nude. This fat and viscera hunger, explorer Vilhjalmur Stefansson told us, is usual among people who live exclusively or chiefly on meat. Moreover, our taste in wines altered gradually from a bias for dry whites to a distinct preference for the sweeter reds. (Cornaro also noted this change.) We discovered that when wine was omitted from the menu for a day or two, we had an unprecedented and ravening hunger for fruits. Our appetites were getting down to cases.

So we hadn't been, after all, irretrievably over-civilized. Our food instincts could still operate, given a chance, and were potentially as valuable as an animal's or a child's. We had clear proof of this whenever,

for the sake of fiercely conventional guests with large, orthodox stomachs, we reverted to a meat-potato-vegetable-dessert meal. Invariably we then left the table drowsy and vaguely ill at ease. We decided that when food has poor quality, or is badly cooked, or cooked in the wrong combinations, one tends to eat too much.

III

Although our diet has turned out to be highly satisfactory for the enervating winters in New York, by spring we grow hungry for country meals, for fresh vegetables and dairy products procured at the source. Time to pack the 69 cookbooks and go to Vermont. Here, by circumstance and choice, we become mainly vegetarian, eating what comes naturally. We gawp with astonishment and pity to see the "foreigners" (summer visitors) buying canned and frozen food in the shops. For, though the growing season in Vermont is brief, it is almost tropically lush. It seems base ingratitude not to appreciate such good luck. A procession of wild fruits — strawberries, raspberries, blackberries, elder- and gooseberries — marches without a break across our rolling acres from June to September. Brown fat mushrooms are abundant and luscious, and can almost be plucked from the window. The small kitchen garden is a never-ending source of

awe to the city-bred half of our family, who still goes just a little daft each year when she rediscovers what vegetables "really taste like." Salads are poems with savory herbs besprent. And, in the fall, when the orchard hands out free apples, the big, raftered kitchen is a potpourri of fragrant activity.

High quality in a vegetable can be recognized instantly when you taste it, but is the difference merely a matter of chemicals, vitamins and minerals? We suspect instead that fine flavor is the mark of a vegetable grown in its own season, without forcing, in good, live soil. It can't be an accident that it then tends to be healthy enough to withstand disease and parasites without artificial help. Wild berries, growing where they want to, taste much more gamey than tame ones. Cranberries, almost alone among American fruits, have resisted every attempt by man to tame and grow them elsewhere than in the acid, sphagnum bogs of their natural choice; their flavor is as sharp and cranberry-like today as when we were children — which is something to think about when we gloat too loudly about man's technological conquest of the earth.

A vegetable, at its very best, can be as savory as a fine, broiled chop. But many vegetables, like some wines, lose virtue and life by traveling.

Corn on the cob is the best known example, but there are others: vine-ripened tomatoes, melons, wax beans, sugar peas (with edible pods) and almost all greens.

In their perfect stage of youthful maturity, no artifice can improve such vegetables; but later in the season we borrow vegetable-cookery tricks from every country in the world (except, of course, England) — principally from those most imaginative of vegetarians, the Hindus, and from the Chinese, whom no one excels, not even the French, in the refined splendor of their cuisine. True, some of these recipes call for ingredients not sold by chain grocers, but the U. S. mail service long ago penetrated the Green Mountains of Vermont.

In the case of Chinese or Indian food, we soon found that we must eat the complete meal to be satisfied. The whole is more nourishing than the sum of its parts, and such menus were evolved to achieve proper balance. Even modern scientists, tardily and a bit grudgingly, concede that the ancients were knowledgeable in this respect. In a recent issue of *Science*, Dr. Ernest Geiger, of the University of Southern California School of Medicine, observed that "the Chinese consume different cereals mixed in definite proportions. In this fashion they have developed empirically a protein mixture of high biological

value. An empirical wisdom similarly developed may be responsible for the timing, sequence, amount and composition of meals consumed throughout the world." Cheese, as we now know, increases the biological value of certain plant proteins. When we eat cheese with our bread, we get more nourishment from the *bread* protein than when we eat only the bread. Other combinations of food that people have always found tempting — sausage and pancakes, apple pie and cheddar, corn pone and "pot liquor" — may some day be officially endorsed as sound dietetics.

IV

Country living has other lures for the down-to-earth gourmet. For anyone too long in city pent, the first taste in spring of unpasteurized, unhomogenized, unvitaminized milk is an agreeable shock. Whatever happens to milk between an honest cow and a city grocer is something we would just as soon not know. Butter, too, and the city cream that sours so unpleasantly that it can never end its life as beautiful curd or palatable cottage cheese, are spoiled in transit. "But — undulant fever!" someone cries in alarm. Well — a good eater must live dangerously nowadays to get the best. As for danger, we know our cows and consider it slight.

Hens that run free lay the best eggs,

and the biddies that provide our breakfasts have the run of the barnyard, including the manure pile. They take what they need to produce their hard-shelled eggs with yolks that stand high in their firm whites like golden domes.

We are convinced that such foods are more nourishing than those which are machine-tooled and sanitized. Dr. Alexis Carrel was right, we believe, in thinking that our "staple foods may not contain the same nutritive substances as in former times. Mass production has modified the composition of wheat, eggs, milk, fruit and butter, although these articles have retained their familiar appearance." But they haven't always retained their old familiar tastes. Bread baked in a wood range has little family resemblance to the pre-sliced, white latex sold commercially. Toasting over wood embers gives it something more, we claim, than electronic scientists have yet been able to reproduce.

The joys of Vermont eating also include gristleless sausage, obtained from another farmer who likes his high on the hog with plenty of garlic; trout, to be wheedled from the pond (our minuscule Walden), if kingfisher, turtle, bear or poacher don't get there first; and sometimes a fresh-killed chicken from a neighbor (fine-flavored, too, even though Vermont

chickens tend to be the clean-limbed, athletic type).

As with the Cornaro diet in winter, each summer our tastes change. For instance, we rarely think of wine, which is no news to those vegetarians who make a solemn virtue of their lack of temptation. Meanwhile, natural selection leads us to the richer products of the bake oven, to shortcakes (the biscuit kind, naturally — any other is illegal in Vermont), to crusty doughnuts, to French fruit pies (feather shells of pastry inlaid with Devonshire cream under fresh fruits in their own jelly), to childhood's beloved chocolate nut brownies, thin sugar cookie stars, and real ice cream — the kind that doesn't evaporate like flavored foam but is smooth and round on the tongue. Carbohydrate hunger follows close on the heels of the outdoor worker. We keep to the two-meals-a-day schedule in summer, too, with one modification — the cookie jar is a shocking barometer for rapacity.

The fact is, *eaten in moderation*, this summer "demand diet" satisfies in its different way just as completely as the meat-bread-wine menus of winter. It neither stultifies nor fattens, though it must be admitted that the greedier of us suffers a temporary tension in the waistband during the shortcake season, which damage can be quickly repaired before serious

wardrobe problems set in. Eliminating carbohydrates for a few days takes care of that — only carbohydrates, however, for "fats are not fattening," as Vilhjalmur Stefansson has been pointing out for thirty years. (Modern reducing diet theory has just caught up with him.)

This, then, is our basic design for eating: quality, variety, moderation and gusty enjoyment. Meat in winter, fruits of the earth in summer. To keep it flexible, we change course gleefully, without any sense of guilt, at the drop of an impulse. But perhaps five days out of seven we live by this pattern, since it provides us with the best at each season. And, incidentally, the cheapest. The cost factor is important to us, and even while using cream, lard and butter with reckless abandon, we spend less on food than we used to. But isn't this essentially the way poor folks have always lived until the miracles of technology flattened the variety and quality of food to the same dull year-around level? Since most of the people in the world have always been relatively poor, most of the world's really satisfying dishes have been created by the poor for the poor. Even now, first generation immigrants in America often have tastier meals than their Americanized children will cook when they keep house, because their natural food in-

instincts still operate and they have not yet been indoctrinated with the ad-borne concept of "speed at any cost." They're willing to take some trouble to "fix it good."

Thus, if our adventures in diet seem a romantic retrogression, a flight from so-called progress, so they are. Science, so far, has contributed precious little to the *art* of dining, and still less to the goodness of food. In such elusive matters we can rely only on *our* sense of taste and well-being. Experiment has taught us that natural food is superior to machine-processed food, and that in general the older the dish — the more generations it has pleased and sustained — the more satisfying it is apt to be.

Perhaps it is coincidence that we are seldom ill and *never* have digestive troubles. We submit that it is not. We are convinced that the degree of relish with which you dine is a vital key to the state of your health. Today, even science seems to be going our way, though cautiously. The late Dr. Walter B. Cannon, professor of physi-

ology at the Harvard Medical School, conceded that "when food is taken with satisfaction and enjoyment, the vagi establish a tonic state of muscle, much as they establish a secretion from the digestive glands." In these pursed, academic phrases, pleasure sounds like rather heavy going, but the message is cheering: *Eat with pleasure for your health's sake.*

That diet is best, we believe, which keeps you happy while you work on a farm, write a poem, build a bridge or rule a nation. But let it be your own diet, not an impersonal formula for "food intake" based on whatever happens to be the theory of the moment.

We, for example, haven't found all the right answers, even for ourselves, and wouldn't dream of prescribing specific menus for other people. But while science tacks from point to theoretic point in patient search of the ideal diet, we have elected to chart a private course with self-knowledge, discipline, and a hearty respect for good living.



BIG RED SCHOOLHOUSES

BY SAM SHULSKY

IN THE chemistry laboratory at Ohio State, in the physics department at the University of Rochester — at scores of such colleges and universities throughout the land, Big Business is today sponsoring the advance of scientific knowledge through its support of scholarships and project grants. Corporation profits — the much disputed end product of the private enterprise system — are being spent by the millions (perhaps as much as a billion) to help push back the frontiers in every scientific field known to man. In the last fifteen years appropriations for university training and research have risen more than tenfold in the most comprehensive program ever staged for broadening the base upon which this country's industrial development and popular standards of living can rise.

Big Business' support of this program is nowhere tabulated in its entirety. Some companies announce their programs, others give data only upon request, still others are close-mouthed about it; but without a

doubt their total effort is one of the biggest single factors in our scientific advancement today. In some cases, fellowships and research are supported for specific projects close to the interests of the donor, on a strict *quid-pro-quo* basis; more often they are grants in support of a general line of research which the company believes will contribute both knowledge and trained personnel in fields in which it is vitally interested. Faced with a steadily increasing demand for specialists, industry is more than willing to help meet the costs of such advanced education. And most of the work being pursued in such programs is of such general and long-term significance that it may take decades before the results can be entered on the balance sheets of industry — if it can, in fact, ever be translated into terms of profit and loss.

To illustrate at random — the Celanese Corporation of America endows graduate fellowships for the study of food packaging, textile dyeing and nuclear physics; Corning Glass Works

SAM SHULSKY is assistant financial editor of the International News Service. His last contribution to the MERCURY, "The Farmers Milk the Public Treasury," appeared in January.

supports a fellowship at the University of Delaware for research on greenhouse glass; the Association of American Railroads last year donated \$600,000 to the Illinois Institute of Technology to build and operate a research laboratory for all types of rail equipment. Other concerns go slightly further afield: Standard Oil of New Jersey gives funds for the study and cure of industrial ailments; the Hawaiian Pineapple Company provides \$1500 a year — plus all the pineapple juice needed in the experiment — to a nursery school at the University of Chicago for the study of the “relationship of mid-morning feeding to the incidence of negative emotional behavior in young school children”; the Sugar Foundation endows research into the extended uses of that substance both as a food and as a chemical.

On an even more academic level, Eastman Kodak Company, an industrial giant in films and synthetics, endows research into child health and metabolism, and into the treatment of arteriosclerosis and cancer; the many projects sponsored by the Schenley Industries, a leader in whiskeys, include the annual distribution of \$3800 to the University of Arizona for the study of antibiotics in the treatment of plant diseases, \$1500 to the Cincinnati General Hospital for penicillin research, and \$3000 to

Ohio State university for a poultry research project; Allied Chemical and Dye maintains 31 graduate fellowships at 24 universities and technical institutes — the fellows, subjects and direction of research are selected and controlled by the schools; and American Telephone & Telegraph extends financial help to advance scientists through post-doctorate fellowships — the field of research again determined by the scientist himself.

E. I. duPont de Nemours, which holds one of the most famous names in chemistry, announced last year the grant of \$10,000 to each of ten universities for the 1949-1950 academic year. The institutions themselves were to select the research fields in which the grants would be employed, provided that such projects were free of any commercial implications at the time the work was begun. If the idea works out, the company stands ready to continue each of the grants for five years. The duPont company, in a single recent year, awarded 68 post-graduate fellowships to 45 universities, paying stipends of \$1200 to \$1800 to each fellow, plus \$1000 to the university to defray the cost of tuition and fees. The courses of study are in chemistry, chemical engineering, mechanical engineering and physics; the universities extend all the way from Brown university in New England to the University of Cali-

fornia at Los Angeles. In addition, six post-doctorate fellowships in chemistry were awarded to as many different universities, with payments of \$4500 each.

The Westinghouse Electric Corporation and the Bausch & Lomb Optical Company are even more fundamental in their approach, for their interest is in human beings as scientists rather than in chemicals in the test tube. Annually these companies help hundreds of promising youngsters in the high school grades, whose scientific interests range from atomic energy to the homing instincts of birds, to continue their studies in advanced fields. The Westinghouse campaign alone attracts attention to as many as 15,000 youngsters a year who, by their teen-age efforts, have proved themselves worthy of careers in science.

Finally, there are corporations which derive their income from big business, but which are set up for no other purpose than to aid scientific advancement. The Research Corporation, for example, is a non-profit commercial and educational enterprise which was originally endowed with the patent rights to the Cottrell Process of electrical precipitation (a method of cleaning industrial gases); it now derives additional profits from commercial patents assigned to it, ranging from aeronautics to vitamins,

and from these royalties it appropriates about \$1 million a year for 250 academic grants in 46 states, Alaska, the Philippines and the District of Columbia. It has also initiated a new program supporting research at smaller colleges.

II

Most colleges, in accepting grants or fellowships, adhere to the requirements set forth by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology — that all industrial funds must be in support of projects which will have value to the educational program, so that the knowledge and experience gained in these researches will flow into the regular graduate and undergraduate curriculums. In some degree this policy applies even to the specific contract research projects which M.I.T. undertakes for certain companies. Work on these contracts is frequently carried out by graduate students under faculty direction as a definite part of the educational program.

This form of coöperation between industry and education is a broad two-way highway carrying money, data and mutually advantageous scientific programs. There is also a decided advantage inherent in the close association of all kinds of scientists — practical as well as theoretical — especially in times of national

emergency. In World War II, radar, proximity fuses, atabrine and advanced metallurgy were derived from the "blood bank," or "stock pile" of scientific know-how, industrial as well as educational. But up until World War II, Europe — and not this country — led the way in pure, or fundamental scientific research, and only our knack in applying the discoveries of European laboratories helped us to stay in the race. Both industry and the country's top scientific leaders realize only too well how close the margin was in the race to develop high speed aircraft, V-rockets, tanks and atomic power.

They know, too, that an entire scholastic generation of scientists was lost when this country — alone among all the participants in the last war — refused to defer science students from military service. Dr. Vannevar Bush estimated that 150,000 scientific and technological students might have received their bachelor degrees during the war, but were not graduated; there is consequently a comparable shortage among advanced scientists today, and replenishment threatens to be very slow. Dr. Bush reckoned that by 1955 our supply of graduates in chemistry, engineering, geology, mathematics, physics, psychology and biology will still be about 17,000 short of the nation's needs. It is easy to see why leaders in science are far

less interested in the specific motivation for a scholarship or fellowship than in the fact that another scientist is being trained in a vital field.

Despite the extent of its support and the free hand with which it dispenses funds, the rôle of Big Business as an academic benefactor has been suspect. The subject matter of these research projects is rarely criticized, no matter how restricted in scope, but the use of their results has not escaped censure. Some universities allow full disclosure of formulas and procedures to all who wish them; others keep all the profits to themselves, and still others must grant close patenting for the exclusive use and profit of the sponsor.

Then, too, after eighteen years of New Dealism, corporate domination of any field makes many people uneasy. They fear that industrial support might place too much emphasis on development research rather than on basic studies; it might influence the faculty and administration toward immediately practical end results rather than the search for new forms of knowledge; again, commercially unprofitable researches might conceivably be dropped, and finally, those experiments which disproved a corporation's claims for its product might be distorted or suppressed entirely. But certainly those donors who have only a vague idea of their

protégés' activities can exert little influence on the trend of their experiments; and the wording of many grants indicates that the contributing corporation is ready to go along for years without demanding concrete results.

There has been some talk that Big Business has used its power as donor to influence social studies toward the side of conservatism. Yet the general trend of social philosophy in our university student bodies during the last decade — when industrial support has mushroomed — can hardly be labeled as conservative. Actually, there seem to be more people who fear that Governmental support of advanced scientific education would end in political domination.

III

Curiously enough, the academic scientist himself is far from frightened by the industrial interest in pure research, even where it requires contact with industrial scientists in solving specific problems. According to Dr. Karl T. Compton, president of M.I.T., the liaison is quite welcome:

The academic scientist has come to recognize the importance even to his own academic research of the contributions which have been made by the scientists and engineers of the industrial laboratories — contributions not only of tools and techniques but also

of basic scientific discoveries. . . .[in] the close collaboration between scientists of both groups during World War II, the academic scientists came to appreciate the caliber of the industrial scientists and the importance of his type of experience and training. . . .

The contacts between industrial and academic research groups provide points of flow in both directions and if one should analyze the resulting flow it would be seen that in general scientifically trained men flow from the academic research laboratories to the industrial research laboratories. This is as it should be for the function of an academic institution is to train men."

With tax laws restricting the growth and continuity of large fortunes, with the cost of laboratory work rising steadily from the Bunsen burner to the cyclotron level, and with new fields of research opening up for exploration — all of which requires more men, money and equipment — it looks as if Big Business will continue unchallenged to do the job it has been doing willingly and on an increasingly large scale. There seems little reason for anyone to complain about it (with the exception, perhaps, of the private industrial research laboratories who feel that the university amateurs are doing their work for them). Chancellor Robert M. Hutchins of the University of Chicago put the case succinctly — if bluntly — when he said: "In a

society which believes in private enterprise as opposed to authoritarian control, the responsibility for the development of science rests with those who can afford to pay for it."

In keeping with this philosophy, his university has gone ahead boldly on a program to mate Big Business with Research. It has set up three atomic age institutes — in nuclear studies, in metals, and in radiobiology and biophysics. Using the same teams of scientists which worked on the development of the atomic bomb, it has equipped laboratories and planned new equipment under a \$12 million program. Chancellor Hutchins explains that the university "took this step without waiting for outside help in the hope that industry and private capital would see the necessity and value of supporting fundamental research into problems neglected during the development of the atomic bomb." They invited industry and private capital to support the program, which the university has underwritten to the tune of \$20,000 a year for membership in one institute, or \$50,000 a year for five years for membership in all three. This is no program for pikers, but Chancellor Hutchins cites its advantages:

(1.) members have access to advance reports — three to six months before general publication — on all

phases of research; (2.) methods or results of particular importance to their own industry are available to members through personal conferences; (3.) the university does not intend to patent any developments unless it would be of general benefit to mankind. This means that industrial members have the "inside track" on any industrial applications which they may develop from contact with the university's atomic scientists and metallurgists; (4.) partnership with a university is the most direct avenue through which information concerning the basic structure of matter can now be obtained by American industry. Much of this information has been in the secret category; (5.) members meet with atomic scientists and metallurgists in quarterly conferences conducted at the university to discuss current progress and techniques.

Industrial members contributing to the Chicago plan include, among others, U. S. Steel, Alcoa, Westinghouse Electric, Standard Oil of Indiana, Pittsburgh Plate Glass, and Shell Oil. But before anyone dares cry "Big Business monopoly" to such contributors, he must first ask the Army, Navy and Air Force whether they cared who contributed the Norden bombsight, radar and jet engines to the war effort — Government, industrial or university scientists? — so long as these weapons were created in time. He must ask

medicine whether the tracer isotopes are of any less value in studying diseases because the Sun Oil Company is a big factor in their production? He must also ask whether the benefits of commercially profitable research redound only to the advantage of the owner?; whether Edison's light bulb has enriched only utility balance sheets?; whether Ru-

dolf Diesel's labors benefited only General Motors? With foresight, American industry today has linked its future advancement with the extension of scientific research. With initiative, it has thrown its huge resources into producing the techniques, tools and trained manpower for defense in war, and for peacetime health and material well-being.

SIGNATURES

BY CANDACE T. STEVENSON

My fathers wrote *their* names in sweat
On forest and on farming land.
Each axe and plowshare, hard to get,
Spelled out a purpose in their hand.

My brothers wrote their names in steel.
Huge buildings rose at their desire;
They hitched explosion to a wheel
And harnessed lightning to a wire.

On air my children wrought their will.
Gaily they rode from cloud to cloud,
And if they dropped destruction, still
They liked that writing and were proud.

Their children sign their names in yet
More grimly catastrophic terms —
An elemental alphabet
Of splintered atom, stalking germs.

AMERICA THROUGH THE KREMLIN'S EYES

BY LOUIS JAY HERMAN

DID you know that Walt Disney was an arch-reactionary? That movie attendance is falling off because of public indignation at Hollywood's vile anti-Soviet propaganda? Or that crime is flourishing because the police are all out tracking down progressive-minded Americans? Such cockeyed facts might be news to you, but every one of them is true — at least it says so in the Russian press, which is currently embarked on an extraordinary campaign of popular enlightenment about America and Americans.

The basic premise of the Soviet propaganda approach to the United States is simplicity itself. As the *New Times*, a weekly Russian foreign policy journal, has expressed it: "Today, the world is divided into two camps — the anti-democratic camp of imperialism, headed by the United States, and the anti-imperialist camp of socialism and democracy, headed by the Soviet Union and the people's democracies."

This being the case, it is plainly incumbent upon all good Soviet citi-

zens to let fly with everything but the kitchen samovar at the imperialist camp. In case they fail to get the point, the Kremlin has carefully spelled it all out for them. Russian literati have been officially notified by the Union of Soviet Writers that they "must expose . . . the nature of capitalist [read American] encirclement, struggle against its corrupting influence, and reveal the character of contemporary imperialism." The same goes for dramatists, who have been ordered to "battle on the ideological front . . . by means of an active, merciless, and unceasing attack upon our enemies." Even Soviet jokesters now have to be sure a good proportion of their wisecracks are aimed in Uncle Sam's direction. The USSR's leading humor magazine, *Krokodil*, was admonished by the Central Committee of the Party for failing "to respond quickly to burning international events and subject the bourgeois culture of the West to criticism, revealing its ideological insignificance and degeneracy."

LOUIS JAY HERMAN is assistant editor of the *New Leader*. He specializes in research on Russian propaganda, and is also a frequent contributor of phrase origins to the *MERCURY*.

For sheer volume, the current campaign to expunge the last trace of wartime affection for America from the Russian mind is in a class by itself. If an American newspaper or magazine devoted comparable space to the Soviet Union and Communism, its bored readers would desert in droves to a competitor. But in Russia the Communist press, which has no competitors, can pour unlimited doses of repetitious propaganda down the throats of its captive audience. The pace-setter has been the *New Times*, which is published in Russian, German, French and English (on unusually high-grade paper, by Soviet standards), and is distributed in every part of the world. The *New Times*' contents during March 1950 show how seriously it takes the Party's injunction to attack the imperialist warmongers. Of a total of 35 articles, ten were specifically anti-American diatribes. The remainder were sufficiently salted with sideswipes at the Yankee malefactors — plus passing shots at their British and French accomplices — to keep the reader's indignation at the proper boiling point.

The propaganda drive is by no means confined to journals of foreign affairs like the *New Times*, or to general newspapers. In totalitarian Russia, whatever a paper's specialty — whether theatre, sports or hand-crocheting — it remains first and fore-

most an organ of state policy; and today it must contribute its meed to the drive against America. As a result, Soviet readers see nothing amiss in a lengthy denunciation of the Atlantic Pact in the *Literary Gazette*, an article entitled "Soviet Dramaturgy in the Struggle with the Warmongers" in *Theatre*, or a warning against "The Devilish Spirit of a New Aggression Threatening the People's Peace" in the *Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate*.

In the theatre itself, the conventional type of villain has almost vanished from the scene. Today, instead, the boards creak beneath a never-ending procession of unscrupulous, grasping American plutocrats. Recently an American correspondent set the number of specifically anti-American plays and movies showing in Moscow alone at 26, not including those with merely passing hostile references. Typical of the many attractive personalities introduced in these real-life dramas is Henry MacHill, of *Conspiracy of the Doomed*, described in the vivid words of *Soviet Art* as "an American financier, a warmonger, a man who conceals beneath an ingratiating mask a malicious, bestial soul." Running MacHill a close second in fiendishness is Sam Gibson, the hate interest in *Behind the Second Front*: "On the outside he is a sociable and even a jolly fellow, but . . .

he is capable of cutting anyone's throat with a broad smile and even a joke if the success of his business depends on it."

II

Under the iron heel of the MacHills and the Gibsons, America looks pretty bleak to the Soviet press. As the *New Times* reports it:

A handful of plutocrats wallow in wealth and enjoy unlimited power, while tens of millions of ordinary people suffer privation and oppression and live in constant fear of the morrow. . . . In their crusade against all progressive-minded Americans, the monopolists are out to turn the United States into a land of police bludgeons and torture chambers. . . . Anyone who dares to give expression to thoughts which do not happen to be to the liking of the omnipotent monopolies and their agents is subjected to persecution . . . the American Gestapo-men [the FBI] are taught how to attack strikers, and are initiated into the gentle arts of secret manslaughter, terrorism and intimidation.

Those Americans not bludgeoned into submission by the FBI Gestapo-men are spiritually corrupted by the monopoly press, which is "controlled by a handful of fascist and aggressive capitalists and their hired menials; [it] preaches . . . man-hating theories, insane ideas of world domination." Much of this witches' brew is

dished up at the notorious National Press Club in Washington: "Here, over a glass of whisky, around the card or billiard tables, rumors and insinuations are born, domestic and world news is manufactured, vicious, lying stories are penned at the warmongers' orders."

In the vanguard of journalistic reaction are the "anti-democratic and pro-fascist" magazines, *Time* and *Newsweek*, and "such mouthpieces of the American monopolies as the *New York Times* and the *New York Herald Tribune*." The Communist Party theoretical journal, the *Bolshevik*, reports that the *Times* is published by the sinister Arthur Hays Sulzberger — "a Jew in origin but a racist and anti-Semite in convictions." Among other agents of Wall Street similarly unmasked are the "malicious warmonger," Walter Lippmann; "the notorious pen gangster, Stewart Alsop"; "the well-known pro-Fascist, Dorothy Thompson," and "the well-known radio liar, Walter Winchell." And worse than Winchell himself in polluting the air-waves and the public print is Drew Pearson — that "eminent gangster of the pen," "unsurpassed master of lies and slander," and "chained dog of the Wall Street monopolies."

"Never before," the *New Times* observes, ". . . did the trusts administer the country as directly as they

have been doing ever since Truman was installed in the White House." Those strange guttural noises issuing from certain quarters in the business community whenever Mr. Truman makes a speech are mere camouflage to deceive the masses, say the Russians. The Republicans and Democrats are actually as alike as Tweedledum and Tweedledee: "both are devoted heart and soul to the service of Wall Street." And the Fair Deal is merely a "concession . . . to the masses"; the President's civil rights program, mere "demagogic . . . frothings."

The Taft-Hartley law, as seen by the Russians, is certain proof of Wall Street's fell grip on the American body politic: "The connection between the draconic Taft-Hartley law and the present course of United States policy is obvious. . . . Monopoly capital, which is out for world dominion . . . regards the existence of strong labor unions as a serious obstacle to the realization of [its] far-reaching plans." If Truman vetoed Taft-Hartley, says the *New Times*, he was merely courting the approval of labor; he knew all the while that he "was not risking the fate of the bill, for the issue of a second vote in Congress [which overrode the veto] . . . was a foregone conclusion."

Working hand in glove with Wall

Street are the "bureaucrats" of the CIO and the AFL, who, "besides abetting the monopolies on all major domestic issues . . . openly support the imperialists on the international scene." The worst of the scurvy lot is William Green, "a lackey of monopoly capitalism, political bandit and provocateur." Next come Philip Murray, the "dictator" of the CIO, Michael Quill and Walter Reuther, who "have long been in the service of the imperialists."

III

Though the picture is most disheartening, Soviet commentators do not despair for the future of America. For there are still the "progressive" Americans — the "democratic," "honest," "ordinary," or "decent" Americans, or, more simply, "the broad masses" — who will always resist Wall Street. As glimpsed in the pages of *Pravda*, *Izvestia* or the *New Times*, these people have a curiously wraith-like quality — they are constantly "growing," but they never seem to get anywhere. Throughout the year, they turn out in force for mighty demonstrations for "peace," "Soviet-American friendship," etc., only to disappear mysteriously on election day.

Most of these elusive creatures are concentrated in the Progressive Party, "a movement of honest Americans who want peace, work and freedom

from fear of war." But they are also active in other spheres. When the celebrated "Cultural and Scientific Conference for World Peace" convened at the Waldorf-Astoria in New York last year, the Soviet press had no difficulty in identifying it as another expression of "the true voice of the American people, who sincerely desire to insure stable peace and friendship among the peoples . . . and cherish a profound respect for the Soviet Union."

The Russian journalists accuse the men who rule America of poisoning the pure wellsprings of American culture. "The propaganda of crime, corruption, animal instincts," co-gently observes the journal, *Soviet Literature*, "is needed by reaction in order to make obedient tools of the popular masses." Every resource of the reactionaries is mobilized for this sinister mission, including the works of that "philosophical lackey of American imperialism" and "warmongering Winston Churchill of philosophy," John Dewey. Their chief reliance, however, is placed on that peculiarly American weapon of imperialist aggression, the motion picture. "Post-war Hollywood production," the *New Times* points out, "is an orgy of vulgarity, of repulsive race propaganda [presumably, the Russians are kept in the dark about such movies as *Gentlemen's Agreement*, *Crossfire*,

Lost Boundaries, *Home of the Brave*, etc.], of psychological perversion, of murders and sadism, decadence and mysticism." This dreadful product is "distributed all over the world [in order] to poison people's thinking and feelings, stir up war hysteria, encourage all the basest instincts and stultify the minds of men and women. The cinema . . . pursues . . . aims connected with the subjugation and enslavement of other peoples, with the mad plans of U. S. world domination." Leading the whole plot is the "Hollywood agent of Wall Street," Eric Johnston, the head of the Motion Picture Association of America.

Things are just as bad on Broadway, which is "essentially nothing but an experimental ground for Hollywood." Broadway plays, according to *Theatre*, are "fashioned in complete conformity with the tasks set by Wall Street." Adds *Pravda* by way of amplification: "A monstrous delirium of reactionary propaganda of fascism is rammed down audiences' throats, people are transformed into the mute, blind instruments — deprived of thoughts and normal feelings — of sordid imperialist goals, the goals of the incendiaries of a new war." Along cultural lines, this is the way they view some of the more popular American plays: *Harvey* — "wandering about the stage is a white rabbit — a product of the hallucinations of

the hero of the play . . . who is suffering from delirium tremens"; *The Iceman Cometh* — "seated around a table are drug addicts, devoid of all human appearance, the dregs of society"; *Arsenic and Old Lace* — "the old ladies in the play . . . hide corpses in a chest"; and *Mister Roberts* — "very toothless criticism of the stupidity of the United States Navy [which] shows the dullness of the average American sailor's life."

IV

On the literary front, Wall Street has evolved an infinitely complex campaign, operating on a sort of two-platoon system. On the one hand, there are the "literary decadents," who "help reaction in its attempts to demoralize the masses and discredit the common man's struggle for freedom [by] vilifying the human race and gloating over repellent scenes of ugliness." Their "works are permeated by moods of pessimism, cynicism, hatred and contempt of the masses." One of the top-ranking "decadents" in America, in the view of *Soviet Literature*, is the ex-progressive, John Steinbeck, who has become "a frank apologist of the present-day American social system." Other decadents are Eugene O'Neill, who exhibits "Freudian leanings, a desperately gloomy view of life and a tendency to emphasize the brute in men"; "the rene-

gade Dos Passos," who "has shown himself in his true fascist colors," and William Saroyan, a specialist in "all sorts of degenerates, drunkards and prostitutes." *Soviet Literature* explains that these are the "avowed decadents," who at least "demoralize the masses without any attempt at concealment." Skulking along behind, under false colors, are the "writers who defend the interests of Wall Street, imperialism and fascist elements in the guise of 'opponents' of decadence and proponents of a 'healthy' literature." While the decadents pump the broad masses full of "gloom and unnameable terrors," "the 'healthy' literature of a militarist tenor aims at educating cynical, immoral men for the role of SS bodyguard to American fascism."

These phoney anti-decadents go right to work recruiting future SS guards among the children, who are taught to read *Superman* magazine from the age of eight. The little tykes are thus indoctrinated with the idea that "gangsterism is the norm in human relations." Later on, they graduate from *Superman* to "gruesome murder novels, [which] educate Americans in the spirit of cruelty, crime and contempt of humanity, [and] serve as guidebooks in the 'murder' line for thousands and thousands of readers."

Along these lines, the Russians in-

dict John Hersey, the well-known "agent of American militarism." Hersey's *A Bell for Adano*, which American readers took for a sympathetic novel on the problems of a liberated Italian town, was actually "permeated . . . by a desire to impose the will of American ruling circles on the Italians." Another such insidious book was *See Here, Private Hargrove*, written by the notorious Marion Hargrove, which put "special stress on the American soldier's devotion to the laws of bourgeois ideology." But the most shameless imperialist apologist of the war was Bill Mauldin, whose drawings appeared in *Stars & Stripes*, a publication identified by *Soviet Literature* as "the organ of American militarists." The heroes of Mauldin's cartoons were Willie and Joe, "two brutish, degraded American soldiers," who are "permanently drunk," who steal chickens from starving French peasants, and gaze upon Europe's "ruin, poverty and suffering . . . calmly and indifferently, with a cigarette stub stuck to the lower lip."

Perhaps the strangest tale is that of Upton Sinclair, a former progressive. As late as October 1948, according to *Soviet Literature*, he was "the leading writer in contemporary America." Indeed, he was "obliged to be his own publisher since the publishing houses run by the plutocrats refuse to take anything written

by as progressive an author as Sinclair." (He has been published for many years by Viking Press.) Almost three million copies of his works had been printed in the Soviet Union. But then Sinclair came out in favor of the imperialist, warmongering Atlantic Pact; he was quickly excoriated in an article in the *Literary Gazette* for April 20, 1949, entitled "Upton Sinclair — Careerist and Slanderer." Sinclair, the *Gazette's* readers were informed, had been motivated purely by "the irresistible desire . . . to ingratiate himself with the powers that be in the U. S." It now appeared that he had been "long known as a careerist and literary profiteer. . . . From the very beginning [his sole concern] was always his personal career. Everything else . . . was only a means to . . . that desired end." And all his progressive books were written "on the assignment of Wall Street."

The Soviet journalists' imaginative recreation of recent history is remarkable, too, particularly with regard to World War II. So many American leaders appear to have been occupied with hatching subterranean plots against the Soviet Union that it is difficult to understand just who was detailed to keep the war going against the Nazis and Japanese. The best British and American brains were

evidently recruited for the task of postponing the opening of a second front in Europe to aid the beleaguered Red army. "In the staffs in Washington and London," recounts the *New Times*, "reactionary political strategy was working energetically to delay and postpone the invasion of Western Europe [in] the hope that the Soviet Union would be weakened and exhausted in its singlehanded duel with Germany." When the second front finally came, it was only because "it became evident . . . that the Soviet Army was able singlehandedly to defeat fascist Germany, occupy her territory and liberate Europe."

Needless to say, the Anglo-American imperialists left most of the work to Russia in the Far East, as well as in Europe. "It was only the resolute and speedy action of the Soviet government after declaring war on Japan on August 8, 1945, that struck the decisive blow and compelled her to surrender [so that] American forces were able to occupy her territory." (Japan sued for peace on August 10, making this unquestionably the most spectacularly successful war in history!) The atom bomb was dropped "not to hasten victory over Japan . . . but to further the long-range policy of atomic blackmail against the Soviet Union."

More recent events on the international scene have been strained

through the same Marxist propaganda filter. A forest fire which laid waste much southern French timberland last year was pronounced by *Izvestia* as the work of "the American chemical trust" bent on ruining France's turpentine industry. When the United States offered to provision athletes at the 1948 London Olympics, it was, said the weekly *Ogonyok*, merely in order to dispose of surplus supplies. "If the Americans don't win," the Russians added, "they can justify their defeat by referring to the canned pork which . . . increased tenfold the strength of the European athletes."

Nothing, however — not even decadent, man-hating American movies — seems to have stirred Soviet journalists to quite the same pitch of dialectical fury as that most nefarious of all American imperialist weapons, that bottled scourge of peace-loving humanity, Coca Cola. Everywhere they go, Stalin's globe-trotting newshawks are haunted by that grim red-and-white sign. Their henchmen in France, along with lobbyists from the wine industry, have even waged a successful legislative campaign to remove it from the French marketplace. Indeed, if the USSR were an ordinary corrupt bourgeois democracy, it might almost be supposed that the Kremlin was yielding to pressure from the vodka distillers' lobby.

FRANKLIN PIERCE: THE RELUCTANT PRESIDENT

BY WENZELL BROWN

THE American people had a grandiose dream in the years that followed the Louisiana Purchase. They saw the United States as a tremendous nation which would absorb Cuba and other islands of the West Indies, plus Central America, and parts of South America. In the political elections of 1852, both leading political parties pledged themselves to a program of national expansion. The Whigs chose as their Presidential candidate a tough, aggressive warrior, a man of courage, strength and iron will untroubled by the subtleties of politics or morals, a man whose modern counterpart might best be found in the late General George S. Patton, Jr. The Democrats selected a dreamer, a gentle idealist, a man both scholarly and naïve. The Americans voted into office the dreamer, expecting him to bring their dream to fruition; by so doing, they prevented the dream from ever becoming reality.

In retrospect, we may realize that

the dream was tawdry, that it lacked morality and that it was activated by a lust for power, but at the time few men thought of it in this light. America's failure to expand outward into the Caribbean and southward into Latin America was caused by bickering, indecision and inadequacy rather than by recognition of man's inalienable rights.

The two men who faced each other in 1851 were strangely matched. The only characteristic they shared in common was that of striking physical appearance. Oddly enough, the more striking and forceful of the two was fore-ordained to be the loser, for Winfield Scott had the power not only to make fast friends but bitter enemies. The crux of the campaign, therefore, was the acceptance or rejection of Scott rather than the adherence to Pierce. Scott was a huge man, six feet, five inches in height, weighing well over two hundred pounds. He was a man of irascible

WENZELL BROWN has written several Presidential reappraisals for the *MERCURY*. His last contribution, "The Fearless Andrew Johnson," appeared in the issue for May 1950.

temper, unbridled speech and gargantuan appetites expressed in terms of food, uniforms, honors and ambitions. Scott was admired by his men, envied by his fellow officers and, so great was the splendor of his appearance, he was even cheered by the sullen, defeated Mexicans when he led his victorious army into the central plaza of Mexico City.

Had Scott stuck to his military activities, the political plums which he sought might have fallen into his lap easily. Unfortunately for his political career, he was as grandiloquent with his pen as with his sword, and far less skillful. His bombastic writings and speeches, filled with flowery hyperbole and massive rhetoric, made him an easy target for more versatile writers. Time and again his pen and his tongue undid his accomplishments on the fields of battle, and Scott was forced to win new military honors to save himself from disgrace.

Compared to Scott, the man who defeated him seemed a pale figure. Franklin Pierce has been portrayed in history texts as weak, vacillating incompetent — and sometimes as a drunkard and a coward. In reality, he possessed a sensitive idealism, a selfless devotion to duty, a pleasing erudition, a rich, warm personality, a wide tolerance and a generosity of thought and spirit which served him better as a man than as a President.

His term of office was a period torn with internal conflict. The North and South were drifting toward open war; demagogues scoured the country whipping up hatred against the foreign born, the Catholics and the Jews. The Know-Nothings, the fore-runners of home-grown fascism, had a turbulent following. Our external enemies waited for an excuse to attack the new republic. Tiffs with England, France and Spain could easily have led to a ruinous war, and further hazards were brought about by buccaneering Americans, who led guerrilla troops into the banana republics to the south and openly flaunted the sovereignty of Latin American countries and the overlordship of Spain.

Amidst the turbulence, a sick, harried and disillusioned President sat in the White House, patching up differences, balancing injustices, arbitrating quarrels. His fair-mindedness, his moderation and his hesitation to condemn frequently appeared to be vacillation and weakness of spirit. Assuredly the bombastic Scott would not have sought delays and conciliations, but would have propelled the country into war. The conflict between North and South certainly appeared to have passed beyond remedy. Pierce was unable to avert the ultimate tragedy of internecine strife, but at least, during his term of office, he circumvented any outbreak of violence.

II

But Pierce was to be relegated to an obscure niche in American history for several reasons. In the campaign of 1851, the issues were never clear-cut; and, ironically, both candidates were in opposition to their party platforms, while at the same time each favored the policies of his adversaries. In consequence, the campaign revolved upon personalities and each party sought to discredit the nominee of the other. Scott's flamboyant personality made him an easy target; Pierce, on the other hand, had lived a personal life beyond reproach and this, combined with his moderate viewpoint, made him more difficult to attack.

The Whigs therefore branded Pierce as a nonentity, a simpering aristocrat, an insignificant personality. Pierce refused to participate in the campaign of vituperation, however. He sat quietly at home, made no speeches and spoke of Scott with respect and honor. Scott, whipped to fury by Pierce's indifference, directed the publication of a miniature book entitled "The Military Service of General Pierce." This book was one inch high and one half inch wide. In a few searing words it mocked at Pierce as a coward, a drunkard and a confirmed anti-Catholic.

That Pierce was highly susceptible to liquor and that he sometimes in-

dulged in it beyond his capacity has been confirmed by contemporary witnesses. Yet there is no record that his judgment was ever impaired at crucial moments by drink, nor was his conduct in any public place indiscreet. The charges of drunkenness were exaggerated but based on fact; the other two indictments were completely false, although they hinged on unfortunate events. During the Mexican war, Pierce served under General Scott and was severely injured when thrown from his horse. Despite Scott's advice, Pierce insisted on leading his men into battle the next day. As the attack began, his wounds opened; he fainted and fell from his mount. This incident, the facts of which Scott knew full well, was used against him to indicate a lack of physical courage. And Pierce had also decried the cruelties of war, even though the pomp and ceremony of the parade ground always fascinated him.

The charges of anti-Catholicism were even more unjust; ironically enough, they were first levied against him by the bigoted rabble-rousers of the Know-Nothing party in an attempt to wean away the heavy Irish vote which Catholic leaders were directing toward Pierce. The basis for the attack lay in the fact that the state of New Hampshire had a discriminatory law preventing Catholics from holding office within the state.

Yet records prove that Pierce had campaigned against the law; he even risked his political future in 1850 by an open attack against it in Concord, wherein he branded the law as "obnoxious in the last degree to the spirit of the age in which we live," and expressed his hope that "this provision of our constitution shall receive the deliberate reprobation of every man in this hall." Furthermore, Franklin Pierce's friendliness to the Catholics, Jews and foreign-born was no cloak for campaign wear. During the years of his Presidency, he appointed many men from minority groups to high offices and maintained several Catholic leaders among his close associates and advisers. And this was a thing no previous President had dared to do. The very men who had once spread the myth of his anti-Catholicism later issued pamphlets accusing him of being "a puppet to the Pope." One charge was as absurd as the other.

Nevertheless, the miniature booklet was a joke that was laughed at so widely that the Democrats feared that it might jeopardize Pierce's chances at the polls. To counteract its effects, they authorized a life of Pierce to be written by Nathaniel Hawthorne. It is unfortunate for Pierce that judgment of his personality and accomplishments rests largely on Hawthorne's portrait of him, for it is a highly inaccurate account. Haw-

thorne's talents as a writer are unquestioned, but his political thinking was, at best, naïve. The picture of Franklin Pierce which comes from his pen is of a shallow, self-righteous prig of a man wreathed in benevolent smiles, with eyes that "issued forth such sparkling light that all who saw him were charmed." This hollow, saccharine figure who was always obedient as a boy and filled with an effeminate grace as a man does not bear even a superficial resemblance to the Franklin Pierce who emerges from a study of his record. Actually, Pierce's defiance of authority as a youth kept him constantly in hot water; and, while as a man he was noted for his tact, he also was capable of espousing many an unpopular cause and he deliberately threw away his chances of re-election rather than compromise his principles.

Pierce was not an ambitious man and therefore it may appear strange that he rose to the country's highest office. That he did so was due to circumstance, almost to accident. As the turbulent leaders quarreled among themselves, Franklin Pierce sat quietly in the background. His negative qualities were those which served him best. He was generally liked, reserved, courteous and considerate. His irrevocable will came to the surface only on occasion. Men felt that with Pierce in the saddle, they could always get a

hearing, that they would be assured of fair play and safe from unexpected action. All this was true; yet Franklin Pierce had been slated to leadership almost from birth.

III

His father was General Benjamin Pierce of Hillsborough, N. H., a rough, untutored frontiersman with a crude strength and an impeccable honesty which made him a leader among the settlers of the New Hampshire mountains. General Pierce was harsh and intolerant, a man who knew no compromise and who held the frills of society in contempt. From early manhood he had held public office, so politics was part and parcel of the Pierce household.

The Pierce family was composed of five sons and three daughters, Franklin being the sixth in line. While the rugged General Pierce had every appearance of dominating the household, its center of warmth and gayety was Franklin's mother, Anna Kendrick Pierce. From the start, Franklin was her favorite, and the physical resemblance of mother and son was striking; there is every indication that there was a corresponding similarity in character and personality. Neighbors described Mrs. Pierce as pretty, lively, vivacious, fond of show and mercurial in temperament. They also indicate that she showed the weak-

ness which was the curse of her son's life, for "on occasions she sought refuge in the excessive use of alcoholic beverages." Franklin adored her, and once wrote of her: "She was a most affectionate and tender mother, strong in many points and weak in some but always weak on the side of kindness and deep affection. When others chided and reproved, she never failed to interpose excuse and justification." In so writing, the President probably had no realization that he was penning an excellent description of himself.

His first schooling was in a one-room schoolhouse, but soon he was sent successively to Hancock, Frances-town and Exeter academies. He was not a markedly good student, and from time to time he was in trouble for pranks and practical jokes. His older brother, Benjamin, had graduated from Dartmouth college, and Franklin planned to continue his education at Hanover, but politics intervened. Dr. William Allen, a close friend and ally of the elder Pierce, was ousted from the presidency of the college and the Federalists took over. General Pierce indignantly announced that he would not have his son educated as an "aristocrat" and entered his name at Bowdoin college in the then new state of Maine.

Certainly Bowdoin at this time was sufficiently democratic for even the general's rather primitive tastes. When

Franklin Pierce arrived there as a frail, slight youth of sixteen, the campus was little more than a clearing in the pine woods. There were only three buildings: two rectangular brick halls and a wooden chapel that was both unpainted and unheated. The bleak rooms were not conducive to intellectual development, nor was the library, which was open one hour daily, the students being limited to withdrawing one book at intervals of three weeks. To Franklin Pierce, however, the real values of Bowdoin lay in the friends he found there.

His most intimate companion was Zenas Caldwell, a religious zealot, whose fanatical antics never struck Pierce as absurd either as a student or in later life. Caldwell had a sobering effect on the youngster which possibly prepared him for a far more valuable friendship with Nathaniel Hawthorne. The youthful Hawthorne entered Bowdoin a year after Pierce, but their liking for each other was instantaneous and endured throughout their lives. The quiet compassion, the gentleness, the inquiring mind of Hawthorne were, in some part, transplanted to his friend; they gave him a sensitivity unequalled in any other President.

Franklin Pierce's high spirits did not abate during his college days. He had several minor brushes with authority. Once he was fined (\$.50) for

sitting in an improper position in chapel. When grades were posted in his junior year, his name appeared at the very bottom of the list. Pierce was furious and swore that he would never attend another class nor open another book. Caldwell prayed for him and Hawthorne pleaded with him and, in the end, Pierce relented and promised to reform. He kept his word, often studying until 4 A.M. and, at the end of his senior year, stood fifth in a class of fourteen.

Among his other college activities, Pierce found time to organize a corps of cadets and, to the annoyance of Bowdoin's president, drilled them on the campus. Pierce was ordered to parade his men elsewhere, but defied this direction. A sharp interchange of words took place between the president and the cadet captain, but Pierce seems to have carried the day for the little corps of soldiers continued their drill with a shy, harried but loyal Hawthorne in the last row. Apparently this incident did not militate against Pierce for, at graduation, he was chosen to deliver one of the class orations. Symbolically he chose for his topic, "The influence of circumstances on the intellectual character."

IV

After Bowdoin, Franklin Pierce studied law under his father's friend Levi Woodbury, who had once been a mem-

ber of Jackson's cabinet. In 1827, he was admitted to the bar and the same year his father assumed the office of the governor of the state. The youthful Pierce was thrust into politics by his father's friends. At 25, he was elected to the state legislature and two years later he became speaker of the house. Pierce did not deviate from the party platform; he spoke only when his position so demanded and was diffident and courteous to the older men who surrounded him. He was rewarded by being sent to the United States Senate almost as soon as he was old enough to be seated. These were the days when Webster, Calhoun and Clay were in their glory; the young Senator from New Hampshire took pains not to cross words with them. His quiet demeanor won favor with party leaders and he was placed in important committee posts. Even Andrew Jackson took note of Pierce's skill in placating disgruntled politicians; on his deathbed, Old Hickory spoke of Pierce, advising his followers that "the interests of the country would be safe in such hands."

Only once in his years as Senator did he take an unpopular stand, with a denunciatory attack against the United States Military Academy at West Point. In demanding a reduction of appropriations, he heatedly charged the West Pointers with seeking education at public expense and

then neglecting their duties to enter private enterprises. Military men never forgave Pierce for this blast, and many years later he deemed it advisable to withdraw his charges.

Shortly after entering Congress, Franklin Pierce took a step which was to alter drastically not only his career, but his personality as well. He married Jane Means Appleton, the daughter of a former president of Bowdoin college. Whatever virtues Jane may have possessed as an individual, she was a most unhappy choice as the mate of a coming political figure. She has been described by her contemporaries as a frail, shy and retiring girl, well-bred and austere, who hated the hurly-burly of Washington and openly despised the crude society of the Capital.

Prodded by his wife, Franklin Pierce resigned his seat in Congress in 1842 and vowed that he had turned his back forever on politics. He set up a private law practice in Concord and steadfastly refused all political honors, even though he was offered the nomination for the governorship of New Hampshire, the post of attorney-general in Polk's cabinet, and an opportunity to return to the Senate.

That he was unhappy in his home life there can be no doubt, and the death of his first two sons in infancy further embittered him. He centered all of his ambitions around a third

son, Benjamin, and the boy was the greatest joy in his life. Nevertheless, at the outbreak of the Mexican War in 1846, he quietly enlisted as a private. In the short span of the war, he rose to brigadier-general but as soon as the war was over, he put aside his military honors and returned again to private practice until the unexpected events of the Democratic convention of 1851 catapulted him to the Presidency.

v

Three leading contenders vied for the Democratic nomination in that convention. They were Lewis Cass, Stephen A. Douglas and James Buchanan. The quarrels among these three were of long standing and their differences could not possibly be bridged. At the thirty-fifth ballot there was a hopeless deadlock, but the weary, disgruntled delegates were kept in line by unrelenting leaders. Then the Virginian delegation brought forward the name of Franklin Pierce. A feeble cheer coursed through the steaming convention hall. One by one the state delegations turned in exhaustion to a man whom they scarcely knew and, on the forty-sixth ballot, Pierce received an almost unanimous vote. When notified, Pierce at first refused to accept the nomination but at length he did so reluctantly, on the argument that the Presidency would

offer him unusual opportunities to forward young Bennie's career.

Both the Democrats and the disintegrating Whigs were hopelessly split on campaign issues. The two platforms were mere jimcrackery. Scott, a Virginian, was feared by the South because of his strong union views, so that his major support came from New England. Pierce, from New Hampshire, was rejected in New England but swept the South and West where he was little known. When the vituperative campaign had drawn to a close and the final votes were counted, it was found that Pierce led by a relatively small popular vote, but the tally of electoral votes gave him 254 to 42 for Scott.

Whatever flush of victory Pierce may have felt was soon turned to intolerable grief. Shortly before his inauguration, Pierce, together with his wife and eleven-year-old Bennie, were traveling by train from Boston to Concord. There was a sudden snap and crash and the car in which they were riding left the track, rolled into a ditch and capsized. Neither the President-elect nor Mrs. Pierce was injured but the boy was crushed to death before their eyes, a blow from which neither of the Pierces ever recovered. When Pierce went to Washington to deliver his inaugural address he went unaccompanied by friends or family; when he was finished his face

was white and drawn and there were tears in his eyes.

The following days in Washington passed drearily for Pierce, yet he chose his cabinet well. Jefferson Davis was his Secretary of War and close personal adviser. He leaned heavily on his Secretary of State, James L. Marcy of New York. For awhile, it seemed that the controversy between North and South might be healed and the threatened war averted. Pierce haggled wearily but skillfully with the contending factions, but on one point he was adamant: no force should be used. During his campaign he had declared openly for an aggressive foreign policy "not to be controlled by any timid forebodings of evil from expansion." The American public was now clamoring for the annexation of Cuba; they felt shocked and betrayed when Pierce calmly announced that he was in agreement with their desires and that he would use any action short of violence to attain them. His concept of the right of self-rule fell upon deaf ears and his morality was judged hypocrisy. The dream of expansion died a-borning, and though Perry opened the gateway to Japan and the filibustering William Walker set himself up as dictator of Nicaragua, the American people grew more and more absorbed in the deepening inner rift that was splitting the country into quarreling factions.

As the Democratic convention of 1855 came around, Pierce was not even considered as a likely candidate, nor is there any doubt of his wish to retire. He attended the convention and, for the first time in four years, he seemed truly happy as he congratulated the successful nominee, James Buchanan. Even this attitude was misunderstood — Abraham Lincoln, who still held a relatively minor rôle in national politics, sneered that Pierce behaved "like a rejected lover making merry at the wedding of a rival."

Pierce was 52 when he left the White House, but in the thirteen years of life that were left to him he was to know little happiness. There was an interval of nearly three years abroad during which he enjoyed the delightful companionship of Hawthorne, but Pierce's eyes kept turning back to the country which he had failed to serve as he wished. As national unity dissolved, there was a corresponding dissolution in Pierce's personality. From time to time in the years that followed, he raised his mild, ineffectual voice in a vain attempt to stop the flood of hate and anger that carried the nation into civil war.

On December 2, 1863, Jane Pierce died and during the next spring, Hawthorne died too. Pierce was now completely alone. Almost numb with grief, the former President gave up

all his work and retired to his home in Concord. The Civil War drew to its close and brought a final disillusioning incident to Pierce. When Lincoln was assassinated a mass meeting occurred in Concord. Tempers ran high and some remembered the criticisms which Pierce had leveled against the Administration. The mob began to shout his name and to hurl wild accusations against him. They moved on to his house and screamed insults beneath his window. Franklin Pierce rose from his sick bed and went out onto the balcony to face his tormentors; he addressed them solemnly: "It is not necessary for me to show my devotion for the Stars and Stripes by any special exhibition. If the period which I served my country . . . has left my devotion to the flag, the Constitution and the Union in doubt, it is too late to resume it by any such exhibition as this inquiry suggests."

This was Franklin Pierce's last speech. Now that all hope of service to his country had passed, he saw little reason to resist the appetite that had plagued him throughout life. He remained in his room, quietly drinking himself into a state of forgetfulness. In the spring of 1869, he went to his cottage at Little Boar's Head, but during much of the summer he lay in a state of semi-coma. That fall he was so weak that he could

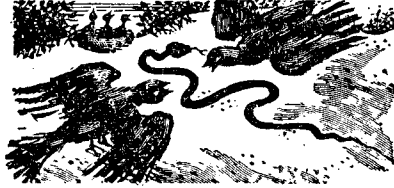
scarcely return to Concord. When he had once reached his great bed, he made no attempt to rise again. The periods of unconsciousness grew longer, and finally just before daylight of October 8, he slipped quietly into death. President Grant ordered a day of mourning, but Franklin Pierce was already forgotten.

No re-evaluation of this man who reluctantly accepted the country's highest honors can credit him with high accomplishment. His administrative talents were limited and his grasp of international situations sadly lacking. Yet the tragedy of his life was not of his own seeking; responsibilities far beyond his capacities were thrust upon him by a people who had made little attempt to measure him in advance. He sometimes brought to the Presidency a grave dignity and a concern for men's basic rights. Perhaps the concepts in his second annual message should be the words on which his memory hinges:

We have to maintain inviolate the great doctrine of the inherent right to popular self-government — to preserve sacred from all touch of usurpation, as the very palladium of our political salvation, the reserved rights and powers of the several states and of the people; to cherish with loyal fealty and devoted affection the Union, as the only sure foundation in which the hopes of civil liberty rest.

DOWN TO EARTH

by ALAN DEVOE



THE SEXTONS

THOSE of us who go field-prowling and woods-inspecting are never about our business for many years before we begin to be nagged by a question. (A question? Questions occur to us by the scores and hundreds, of course. Before we are ten years old we have entertained uncountable wonderings about what is going on inside a common stump or among the roots of a dusty blade of grass, and the wonderings about our earth go right on until the day we are resorbed into it. But I mean that this one special question keeps confronting us and puzzling us pre-eminently, and it may be a very considerable while before we are able to learn the answer.) Why do we find so few dead animals and birds?

Every now and then the corpse of some creature turns up on the highway. The animal has been struck and killed by a car. But these occasional dead squirrels, skunks, woodchucks,

robins, are only a handful. Our earth teems with animals. There are a hundred rabbits frequenting the nearest small woods, probably a thousand meadow mice scampering and scuttling among the long grass in the fields of the nearest farm. All animals must die, some time. We go peering and scrutinizing on innumerable nature-excursions and we scarcely ever find any. Why is it?

Partly the answer lies in the fact that few creatures of this earth except ourselves die "natural" deaths. Rabbits don't often get to be gray-muzzled grandfathers, drowsing away at last into a gentle final sleep. They have their spines cracked by a fox when they are six months old; or hawk-talons seize them and they are carried off; or they are killed by dogs or guns or weasels or God-knows-what. Birds lose their way in bad weather and smash into obstacles. They miscalculate their strength on migration and plummet exhausted

into the sea. An old squirrel is a rarity, and so is an old animal of almost any other kind except the largest and best-defended.

True. Still, violence doesn't kill *all* creatures. A very few, at least, must reach old age and die of that. Then there is disease. Wild creatures contract a great many diseases — fevers, virus infections, infestation by fatal parasites, intestinal inflammations closely similar to human appendicitis, malaria, typhoid — a book of animal diseases makes as big a volume as a treatise on our own disorders. Animals can die “in their tracks” as human beings sometimes do. Where *are* all the furred and feathered bodies that we might expect to keep finding when we go exploring outdoors?

A major answer lies in the secretive, chiefly nocturnal activities of an extraordinary creature called *Necrophorus*. It is a black and yellow-orange beetle, smaller than a finger joint. Its rôle is plain enough from its name. It is the Bearer of the Dead.

A good many popular and colloquial names are used by naturalists to describe this scuttling little animal that performs such tremendous offices in the darkness of the night. Most shortly and aptly, it is called the sexton.

Suppose, now, that a rabbit has gone blundering and crashing into

the wire netting around our garden and has broken its neck. The small body twitches briefly and lies still. We notice it, perhaps, when we are out mulching the roses in the afternoon. We think: Tomorrow I must bury that poor beast. The tomorrow comes, and we go out, and there is no rabbit. Perhaps a fox or coon has found it and lugged it away? Perhaps, perhaps; but not likely. The chances are that the rabbit is still near at hand, around our garden. But between sundown and sunup, it has been interred. In the black hours, the sextons have been at work.

II

In the darkness, there is a whirry little clatter of beetle-wings, like a smaller version of the buzz of a June bug. There alights beside the rabbit's corpse a small black and yellow beetle with powerful black legs. It comes to earth a few inches from the dead body, and waggles its antennae inquiringly to catch more precisely the smell of death that has brought it to this place from perhaps a long way away. The odor of death, to a sexton beetle, carries great distances on the heavy night air. The sexton scurries closer to the body. It closes its heavy, beetlish wing-covers over its flying-wings. It is ready to undertake its business.

For some minutes the sexton ex-

amines the corpse, touching it lightly here, there, with its feelers, pitter-patter, pitter-patter, as in a quick gesture of "running its fingers" over the body. What it is determining, we don't know. To get inside the consciousness of any animal is hard. To project ourselves inside the insect-being of the sexton and know, so to speak, what is going through its mind, is all but impossible. Clearly, however, it is making tests of one sort and another; it is obtaining a picture, sensory or more than that, that is meaningful to it. Pitter-patter, pitter-patter, go the feelers. Then presently the sexton backs off a little. It knows what it must know. It approaches the corpse again, wedges its dome-backed body under one side of it, scrabbles away at the earth to roughen it and clear away a little patch, and then in an adroit gesture the sexton flips over on its back.

Farther, farther, lying on its back, the sexton insinuates itself under the dead body. Everyone who has practiced at all with weights, or who has watched "strong-men" going through their prodigious feats, must know what tremendous weights can be supported by leg muscles when a man is lying on his back. We have two legs. The sexton beetle has six. As the sexton lies on its back, pushing upward with all its might with these six stout black legs, it is able to show

a power almost unbelievable. The body of the rabbit begins to jiggle and rock. Farther, farther, the little sexton beetle works its way under the rabbit, sliding on its curved, polished back, holding the rabbit aloft by leg-power. Finally the sexton is directly underneath the body. It is supporting the whole weight of it. It is at dead-center. In a mighty pedalling motion, with all six legs, the sexton sends the rabbit's body lurching perhaps half an inch toward the edge of the garden bed. As the body drops to settle again, the sexton scoots out from under it, slips over right-side-up again, and now rests briefly, contemplating what it has wrought.

What the sexton is doing is moving the corpse toward a softer spot of sandy soil which it has selected as a better burial-spot. It may need to move the body a foot. It may need to move it ten feet. It is quite capable of doing so. For the strength and energy of the sexton are prodigious. It will work, hardly halting, all night long. And it is pretty certain to obtain, any moment now, a helper. Another little whirry clatter of beetle-wings sounds in the darkness. A small form drops to earth beside the rabbit. A female sexton has arrived.

There is no courtship between the insects, unless their immediate joining together in the work of burial can

be called such. They work together, in perfect team-operation, as if the thing had been rehearsed. When the male pushes, now, the female runs to the other side of the rabbit and pulls. When the male is *under* the body, supporting the cadaver on his legs and pedalling it forward, the female is at the rabbit's head, scrabbling frantically to clear away impeding twigs and pebbles. Are insects intelligent? Not fully humanly intelligent, no, of course not. But — well — *insectly* intelligent? It is difficult to doubt it. When a rootlet or grass-blade gets in the way, one of the sextons hurries to chew it through and cut it. Beetle works with beetle in a team-play like the nice joint-expertness of acrobats. Inch by inch, inch by inch, the body of the dead rabbit is juggled forward. In an hour, two hours, five hours — the sextons are tireless — it is brought to the selected site for burial.

The sextons whisk underneath. They dig. Down, down, the rabbit sinks, in a slow, jiggly descent into its grave.

Now only an inch or two of it is still visible above the sandy ground; now even that has disappeared; now there is no rabbit at all, but only a heaving and rippling of the earth to let a watcher know that the sextons are still at their dark work, down underneath the interred body.

III

When the corpse lies several inches deep, the sextons pluck away its fur and groom it and work it into a ball. They dig a *side-tunnel* out into the earth from the burial chamber, and there the female lays eggs. The fantastic preparations for the next generation of sexton beetles are now completed.

Most insects do very little looking after their young. The majority, of course, do not tend the young insects at all. But sexton beetles do. While they wait for the hatching of the eggs, they feed on the rabbit's body. Then, when their yellow grubs hatch out, they take care of *their* feeding. What the parents do is to take mouthfuls of the decayed rabbit-flesh and then vomit it up, partly pre-digested, for the babies. They keep up this feeding until the grubs have finished their moltings and have become ready to pupate and transform into adult sexton beetles. As soon as pupation has started, in a chamber under the soil, the young are in no further need of tending. The adult sextons come tunneling up from their fetid tomb, take to the air again, and go their ways.

The lives of sexton beetles are macabre enough. They may dismay the squeamish. There is no reason, really, why they should. Is it a bad

thing that carcasses are removed and buried? Is it worse that a beetle should feed on long-dead bodies than that we should feed ourselves on recently-dead ones? Meat is meat, flesh is flesh, and everything in the world lives on some other thing. If we do not like those terms, we are on the wrong planet. Vomiting may signify unhealthiness when it happens among *us*; but among a great many creatures it is as sound and sunny a part of natural living as the singing of songs. Hummingbirds, after their fashion, vomit food into their nestlings. Are they any the less lovely in their delicacy and grace? The "pigeon's-milk" of the poets is discharged cellu-

lar matter from the birds' crops. Are doves any the less dove-like and delightful, for all that? Still, still — it is not always easy to be sensible philosophers. We don't like the smell of death; we don't like any sort of funereal suggestions; and doubtless it is not odd that sexton beetles, among those who have ever heard of them at all, should inspire a kind of horror.

It is probably futile for a naturalist to hope to dispel that queasiness about the sextons. But it does lie open to him, anyway, to indicate why the answer to the perennial query, "Why do we find so few dead birds and animals?," has at the very least a singular interest.

TANK TOWN

BY LESLIE NELSON JENNINGS

Tank Town, they called it. Once a day the train
Roared through, and there was nothing much to see
But a few shabby store fronts where the main
Street struggled against dust and apathy.
Windows were mostly dark at nine o'clock;
The signal tower beside the tracks showed green;
The Diesels' throaty hooting seemed to mock
Those huddled houses racing by unseen.

Still east and west the streamlined sleepers rolled
Across brown prairie; in the club car's bright
Complacency the drinks came tall and cold,
Cornland and windmill fading out of sight
As wheels ticked off the super-extra fare.
And Tank Town might as well have not been there.

WINNIPEG: PORTRAIT OF A BOOM TOWN

BY STEWART H. HOLBROOK

FORTY years ago Winnipeg seemed to me the most exciting city imaginable. I arrived there fresh from high school in an old and staid New England village to find a frenzied metropolis that contrasted, most favorably in my eyes, with the genteel and leisurely pace of Montreal and Boston, both of which I had visited many times. Winnipeg advertised itself as The Gateway to the Golden West. It was and is all of that, and more.

The excitement began at the railway depots, where some thirty-odd horse-drawn hacks met all the trains. The cries of the drivers, in accents ranging from Yorkshire to Bow Bells, extolled the merits of the Queen's, the Clarendon, the Wellington and other hotels, and created thereby a terrific din. Main street from City Hall north to the shacks and tenements of Little Russia and Little Poland was lined with small hotels, all with large bars, that alternated with real-estate offices, penny arcades, and movie and variety theatres. Com-

bination tobacco and newsstands occupied every hole in the wall, displaying posters announcing "British Mail Has Arrived." Bewhiskered men and shawled women straight out of Chekhov stood on street corners bemused by the clanging trolley cars and the blinking lights. On South Main was the austere yet romantic store of the Hudson's Bay Company, and the remnants of old Fort Garry.

Portage avenue had a higher tone than Main street. Here was Timothy Eaton's great store; here, too, Revillon Freres, Dingwall's, Renfrew's, and the *Free Press*. But the real-estate men infested the avenue, and their windows displayed immense oil paintings of the scores of new cities waiting to make fortunes for judicious investors. Many of these future centers of population were little more than "projected," but there they were before the eye in staggering colors — magnificent Moosomin, Athabasca Landing, Swift Current, incomparable Moose Jaw, and Medicine Hat — the

STEWART H. HOLBROOK'S last article for the *MERCURY*, "*The Life and Times of Reed College*," appeared in October. He is the author of *Yankee Exodus* and other books.

very names were fascinating to any Easterner.

Early and late Portage avenue was alive with people, not only real-estate sharks and businessmen, but farmers in sheepskin coats, Indians in blankets, Englishmen with canes and bowler hats, and the white-jacketed lads of the Cameron Highlanders, their tartan skirts swaying, their Glengarrys at a cocky angle. Streetcars filed by in endless procession. A few pioneer taxis were in operation, mingling with the limousines of Wellington Crescent's *nouveau riche*, and the vic-torias of conservative Armstrong's Point.

Even the outdoor sports were strange. They included lacrosse, cricket and soccer, and were played in the long Northern twilight between supper and ten o'clock. There were also the Caledonian Games, field days devoted to discus, javelin, sword-dancing, and bagpipe competitions, that attracted thousands and displayed the tartans of all the Scottish clans from Armstrong to Wallace.

Winter, I learned, came early to Winnipeg and stayed long. It was a season of four months of alternate blizzard and clear, bitter, glittering bright cold, the nights vivid with Northern Lights, now a mere sullen glow on the horizon, now flaring up with all the brilliance of the spectrum. Cold was nothing new to me, yet I

used to wonder how the Winnipeg cops on point duty — traffic police — managed to survive. They had to be akin to Eskimos.

The great event of winter was Bonspiel Week, when curling teams from all over the Canadian West, and some from the United States, converged on Winnipeg to curl on the ice and drink untold amounts of Scotch whiskey. Curling, like golf, comes from Scotland. Anything or anybody from Scotland was and still is sure to find a welcome in Winnipeg. It is far and away the most Caledonian city in North America, a place where no procession rates the name of parade unless it contains a minimum of six kilty bands.

II

The center of the fur trade in the old Northwest Territories of Canada was where the Red and the Assiniboine rivers meet in what is now the Province of Manitoba. Small forts and posts of the Hudson's Bay and the Northwest companies, contenders for furs, were scattered along the rivers. Several of these were congregated near the present site of Winnipeg.

Until 1812 there were no settlers. In that year came Scottish peasants who had been dispossessed when their landlords, formerly their clan chieftains, discovered that sheep were more profitable than crofters, as tenants

were called. One of these landlords, bighearted Lord Selkirk, had no liking for such business. He had given his best years and most of his fortune to forming colonies of the dispossessed crofters in Canada, bringing families to Prince Edward Island and Ontario; and now he brought another group, this time into the unexplored mid-continent. These people came, moreover, *by way of Hudson's Bay*—domestic animals, possessions, aye, children, bagpipes and all, and it was a trip to have stopped all but the hardest.

The seventy-odd Scots, their pipes skirling, arrived on the Red river too late to put in crops. They endured a dreadful winter, but most of them survived to put up their mud and log huts and begin farming. In 1816 they were attacked by Metis, French half-breeds, who had been inspired by the Northwest Company. This was the Massacre of Seven Oaks, during which 22 settlers were killed.

But the Selkirk colony survived by perseverance, and presently, when the Northwest and the Hudson's Bay companies were merged, it was accepted as established fact that agriculture had come to stay. Soon the Bay company built Fort Garry, from which the settlement took its first name. It was still Caledonian, too, for many of the Bay people were from Scotland. The pipes played every day

at Fort Garry. Oats were consumed for breakfast. Haggis was had in season. Golfers frightened thousands of prairie dogs. Everybody danced on Bobby Burns' birthday. Christmas was three weeks long. But mostly it was work, work done in thick, black mud, or in deep snow, or under a blistering sun that had no pity on people without shade trees.

There were troubles, too, when Louis Riel led a Metis' insurrection, seized Fort Garry and raised a flag bearing the French *fleur-de-lis* and a shamrock. He proclaimed a republic, and also made the mistake of "executing" one Thomas Scott, an obscure Orangeman, who then became and has remained a martyred hero. Red-coat soldiers soon put down the uprising and drove Riel into the United States. The Province of Manitoba was created in 1870, and its capital was soon called Winnipeg, allegedly from a Cree word meaning muddy water. When the city was incorporated in 1873 it held less than two thousand people.

Winnipeg's first wheat was exported by way of the Red river, a promise of things to come. What was needed, though, was a railroad. The first through train of the Canadian Pacific arrived at Winnipeg in 1885, bringing troops to put down a new rebellion set off by the same Louis Riel, who had returned from exile. It was quelled

with some bloodshed, and as a warning to future prophets, Riel was properly hanged at Regina.

The effects of the Canadian Pacific Railway on Winnipeg were immediate; the population more than doubled in the next decade. The weekly *Free Press* became a daily, and John Wesley Dafoe arrived to put it in the front rank of Canadian newspapers. As the tracks of the CPR moved on through Saskatchewan and Alberta, the great open spaces began to fill up somewhat with immigrants from the British Isles, Europe and the United States. They began to plant wheat. Winnipeg built its grain exchange and started to buy wheat and sell it to the world. It still does. It is the place where men watch the weather as perhaps nowhere else; where a hailstorm, say, along the Peace river, a thousand miles distant, might well mean the difference between the poorhouse and a home on Wellington Crescent, complete with chauffeur.

Up went the Walker theatre, a road-show house that astounded more than one thespian, knighted and otherwise, who had thought playing Winnipeg meant playing in an igloo. The Canadian Pacific Railway erected a big hotel right next to its brick and marble depot. Named for a queen, the Royal Alexandra is Edwardian in décor and elegance. More than a few condescending Englishmen and Amer-

icans have been quickly put in place by the hotel's splendor, by its mighty bathtubs, its huge towels, the size of its rooms, its acres of pillared lobby, and the astonishing courtesy of its personnel. Timothy Eaton, too, saw in Winnipeg a future metropolis, and there, on what seemed the very outskirts of town, he put up a store that covers an entire city block and rises eight stories, a strange sight on the edge of the prairie's emptiness.

A second transcontinental, the Grand Trunk, reached the Gateway to build a big depot and erect a big hotel. The Northern Pacific reached up from Minnesota. Beginning about 1904 and continuing until the eve of World War I, these railroads could hardly find cars enough to bring the thousands upon thousands of immigrants who filled the steerages from the British Isles and North European ports. Many Americans joined the surge into the prairie provinces. It was at this time that Winnipeg broke out with a rash of real-estate offices and their wonderful paintings, in which every last acre in all the vast region between Fort William, Ontario, and Vancouver, British Columbia, appeared to be for sale. The promised land ranged well north, too, and I recall seeing in a shark's window a particularly imaginative chromo of Fort Churchill, an astounding metropolis which, according to the pic-

ture, raised its skyscrapers dizzily above the bogs of Hudson's Bay itself, and whose various subdivisions, laced with humming streetcar lines, ran on and on into infinite distance.

The untrammelled promotion of Fort Churchill was typical of hundreds of such affairs. For almost a decade after 1904, Western Canada was in a tremendous land boom, a kind of mass insanity that mounted in intensity until the Bust came. Winnipeg was the center of everything. The Bust hit in 1913. Dreary enough years followed, cheered now and again by thumping big crops and good prices. The least of these ups and downs was felt in Winnipeg, merchant and banker to the West.

III

In 1950 Winnipeg was visited by the worst of the many floods of the sullen and unpredictable Red river of the North. Only one life was lost, but the damage was incalculable. Control of the Red is probably the greatest problem faced by the people of Manitoba, a large majority of whom live in Winnipeg. Engineers are discussing a big ditch that would by-pass Winnipeg and permit flood waters to enter Lake Winnipeg by a second route.

Winnipeg is now the fourth city in the Dominion. In the manner of all Western cities its boosters talk wildly and mention a population of 400,000,

though by actual count the number seems to be closer to 320,000. Many of these people are Scotch by birth or descent. The telephone book lists two whole pages devoted to Camerons and Campbells. There are scores of Stewarts and Stuarts. The various Macs run to many pages. The Ukrainians have also made notable progress these past few years. There are no fewer than fifteen Ukrainian societies in the phone book; they include the Ukrainian Labor Temple, the Ukrainian Home Association, the Ukrainian Old People's Home and the Ukrainian Booksellers. And there are three Ukrainian newspapers. These hard-working men and women still form what is thought to be a weakening Ukrainian Bloc. The younger generation are Canadians first, Ukrainians second.

An older migration to Winnipeg, the Icelanders, long since began to integrate with the Anglo-Canadians, and have moved up the ladder economically and socially. A daughter of Icelandic parents recently married into the family of Canada's greatest merchants. Another married a prominent grain man. The Icelandic press in Winnipeg has disappeared.

Winnipeg today retains the life and energy I sensed when I first knew it forty years ago. One approaches it after two days through the deep and often desolate wilderness of north-of-the-lakes Ontario, and it rises abruptly

from the flat prairie like some gigantic mirage. All of its streets seem to end somewhere over the horizon. But they are bare no longer. Vast plantings have brought shady avenues and sumptuous parks.

The tempo of Winnipeg, I would guess, is the fastest in all Canada. It is a dynamic place, not yet full-size and feverishly at work to build more. Winnipeg people have tremendous vigor. They have a warm friendliness that perhaps stems in part from their isolated position, the only Canadian metropolis between the Great Lakes and the Pacific ocean. They are, in

spite of their big buildings and all-around cosmopolitanism, still a part of the frontier, in a lonely city on the edge of the illimitable prairie, and not too far from the bogs and barrens of the Arctic. I can think of no other city that has known the sudden booms and the stark depressions which have dogged Winnipeg from the time of the Selkirk settlement to the present day. Only hardy people care to live there; only hardy people can. And they live with that fierce energy, tempered by easy courtesy and wide-open generosity, which is the hallmark of life on the frontier.

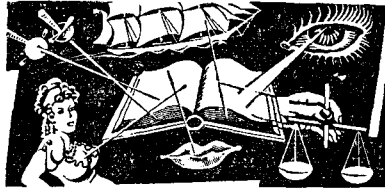
THE OLD AND THE OLD

BY JOSEPH JOEL KEITH

The old who sit long days
content with being old,
the fire of their summer small,
smoke of their autumn thinned,
drift now to burdened benches
moved out in the sun;
they are warmed by the mind's old flame
and by the collars pinned.

The young who wait long days,
the young forever old,
the fire of their summer ash,
are lost in a forest, thick,
and black and brambled; bundled
not far from the sun
in the dark, all the thoughts are as dull
as candles without a wick.

THE LIBRARY



ERNEST HEMINGWAY

by CHARLES ANGOFF

IT IS likely that the future literary historian will look upon Hemingway's latest book, *Across the River and into the Trees* [\$3.00. Scribner], as marking the end of an epoch in American literature. In it the father of the "tough" school of fiction writing has produced not merely a poor novel, but also a caricature of his method so offensive to good literary taste that it may put a stop to whatever remaining influence that method has enjoyed among young writers.

The Hemingway style and outlook on life have had, at the same time, a most powerful and a highly dubious effect upon the literary *mores* of our day. It is difficult to recall, at the moment, another author in the past fifty years who has been imitated so much as Hemingway. Howells, Crane, Norris, Dreiser, Wharton, Cather, Fitzgerald, Lewis, Steinbeck for a time greatly appealed to the general public but they did not start schools.

They were interested in the portrayal of character, in probing its roots in environment and heredity, and in following its struggles, triumphs and failures in the mysterious tangle of good and evil, beauty and despair, horror and ecstasy, that is life. That grand tradition of fiction writing appeared to have the sanction of natural law. Tolstoi, Flaubert, Maupassant, Hardy and the other great masters adhered to it closely. One of its assumptions was that the inner man was the real man, and that his outward attributes had significance only insofar as they revealed this inner man. Another assumption was that character was paramount in both life and art; that individuals varied as to their character; that it was one of the functions of creative writing to depict this difference as clearly, accurately, and completely as possible; and that character was somehow, in some mysterious fashion, related to that still more mysterious something known as the soul in former times. A third assumption

was that the physical aspects of human experience are most effectively related when merely suggested, that they had best not be stressed since they are only the means to non-physical ends, which alone are important.

The writers of popular fiction have, in effect, denied the validity of these assumptions. They are chiefly interested in the outer man, in dramatic exploits of love, in banditry, in violent passion, and they employ their talents in detailed analyses of the purely physical aspects of living. An outright murder is to them more real than a broken heart, and a sudden, violent act of sexual intercourse more revealing than a shy kiss in the evening.

Hemingway has never considered himself a popular writer, yet the fact is that his assault upon the assumptions of traditional fiction writing has had much in common with the views of writers of popular fiction. If he believes in the existence, not to mention the primacy, of the inner man, his writings have yet to prove it. From his very first book to his present one he has dealt chiefly with outward things; specifically, with horror in the Midwest woods and small towns, death in the bull ring, death on the battlefield, death in the mountains, forests and lakes, manslaughter in the prize ring, and mechanical love-

making between mechanical young men and women. Apparently he has looked upon violence as the supreme expression of life, and he also sees the highest moral worth in its virtues. Lieutenant Henry, obviously speaking for Hemingway, in *A Farewell to Arms*, says, "Nothing ever happens to the brave."

This preoccupation with violence has no significance in itself. It is a worthy theme for the writer, as witness *War and Peace*, *Moby Dick*, and *The Red Badge of Courage*. But Tolstoi, Melville and Stephen Crane treated it as an occasional attribute of human life, not as its only or most telling one.

Hemingway has nearly always been interested in killing and hurting as ends in themselves, as the chief themes of fiction, as, indeed, the glories of all life. The very highest compliment he can give Shakespeare is that, as Colonel Caldwell, the leading character in *Across the River*, says, "He writes like a soldier himself."

II

Hemingway's preoccupation with the impact of things upon the outward man has had its rewards. It has apparently been largely responsible for centering his attention upon the fascination of mere things; and it has probably tended to make him economical in his use of words. He can

describe sunrises with rare beauty, and he can report the bare motions of guns and animals and men hunting and skiing and boxing and bull-fighting with stark clarity. The battle sections in *A Farewell to Arms* and *For Whom the Bell Tolls* are truly striking in their over-all effect. Even his connective scenes are written with very considerable power, as can be seen from the following brief passage from *A Farewell to Arms*:

A new wide road was being finished that would go over the mountain and zigzag down to the bridge. When this road was finished the offensive would start. It came down through the forest in sharp turns. The system was to bring everything down the new road and take the empty trucks, carts, and loaded ambulances and all returning traffic up the old narrow road. The dressing station was on the Austrian side of the river under the edge of the hill and stretcher-bearers would bring the wounded back across the pontoon bridge. It would be the same when the offensive started. As far as I could make out the last mile or so of the new road where it started to level out would be able to be shelled steadily by the Austrians. It looked as though it might be a mess. But I found a place where the cars would be sheltered after they had passed that last bad-looking bit and could wait for the wounded to be brought across the pontoon bridge. I would have liked to drive over the

new road but it was not yet finished. It looked wide and well made with a good grade and the turns looked very impressive where you could see them through openings in the forest on the mountain side. The cars would be all right with their good metal-to-metal brakes and anyway, coming down, they would not be loaded. I drove back up the narrow road.

While this is not poetry — Hemingway does not seem to be very fond of poetry and considers prose “more difficult” — it is very effective and a great relief from the doily-anti-macassar type of prose written by Cabell and Hergesheimer in the Twenties and admired so much at the time. Hemingway pretty much put an end to it, and for that deserves credit. He also lifted some fictional conversation to a new level. He has a sharp ear not only for the words but for the nuances of the less complicated types of humanity — prize fighters, bull fighters, women without taste, boulevardiers, and professional huntsmen. It is the conversation in *The Sun Also Rises* that makes it so memorable a book, and it is the conversation that makes such stories as “The Killers” and “Fifty Grand” so exciting to read even the third and fourth time. Hitherto the people in such stories had been dealt with a bit condescendingly even by so conscientious an artist as Ring Lardner.

Hemingway, through his deep and genuine love for them, and for their occupations, transformed their lives into viable art. For that, too, he merits commendation.

His great mistake, however, was in assuming that life is basically a pulp story and most of the people therein composed of the same material. The validity of this philosophy is gravely to be doubted. It runs counter to the findings of the greatest writers of the human race, including Shakespeare, whom Hemingway, in his big he-man manner, calls "the winner and still the undisputed champion." But valid or not, it certainly does not offer a vantage point from which to write genuine literature about a very large portion of the human race. While Hemingway confined himself to his pulp characters, he wrote admirably about them, as he wrote admirably about things — for pulp people, to a considerable extent, may properly be viewed as things. Even such folk are on occasion filled with an obsessive bewilderment concerning the inscrutable order of things, as Rodin revealed in his sculpture *The Thinker*; but it is true that sizeable segments of their lives can be treated as if they were soul-less objects.

Men and women of a more complex nature, however, are ruled by psychological, moral and spiritual forces that are almost as mysterious now as they

were at the dawn of history. No aspect of mature personality can be measured or definitively catalogued. It can be apprehended only intuitively, and the quality of the apprehension is the measure of the artist.

On this score Hemingway has failed catastrophically. Not once has he apprehended with true maturity. The people in *The Sun Also Rises*, perhaps his most successful book, despite all the dazzling conversation, seldom rise above just that — conversation objects, things talked about, without independent existence. The men and women in *A Farewell to Arms* have no more reality than their counterparts in the fiction of periodicals with mass circulations. They have courage, according to Hemingway, they love, they lie, they swindle, they talk and talk and talk, but they never come to life. They have no development. One knows as much about them after reading ten pages as after reading 200 pages. They reveal no inner conflicts, no adult doubts or yearnings, no lasting regrets. The men can largely be interchanged, as can the women. Catherine is an English Maria, and Maria is a Spanish Catherine. Similarly with Jordan and Henry.

III

The more intricate the character and the more complex and refined the inter-personal relationship the greater

is Hemingway's failure. Thus he is at his most lamentable in his writings about women and about love. His women are seldom more than womanly moods; most often they are only posters.

They have breasts but no hearts; they have curves but no inner softnesses; they are coöperative but not comforting in the immemorial womanly manner. They are females with nothing to distinguish them from females of other animal species save their powers of speech.

According to Hemingway, what takes place when a man and a woman are in love can all be described very briefly in simple words. They gabble a bit, then have their will of each other, and that is all. Hemingway is probably the only respectable author in all world literature who does not think that civilized people need poetry for authentic love-making. He fails to distinguish between the means and the end. He considers the means as the end. No wonder so many women readers find him revolting, and no wonder so many men readers look upon him as the perennial adolescent.

Hemingway seems to have no concept of the wonderful tenderness and the attendant ineffable silences that can come between man and woman. He sees them in terms of juvenile tediousness, as witness this passage from *A Farewell to Arms*:

"What would you like me to do now. . . ?" [asked Catherine]

"Come to bed again."

"All right. I'll come."

"Oh, darling, darling, darling," I said.

"You see," she said. "I do anything you want."

"You're so lovely."

"I'm afraid I'm not very good at it yet."

"You're lovely."

"I want what you want. There isn't any me any more. Just what you want."

"You sweet."

"I'm good. Aren't I good? You don't want any other girls, do you?"

"No."

"You see? I'm good. I do what you want."

IV

Hemingway's emphasis upon the outer attributes of men and women has driven him and his followers to seek "meaning" in realms that have hitherto been considered poor literary soil. Authors who adhere to the assumptions of the grand tradition of fiction writing have never been tempted thus, for the inner man is limitless in his dazzling mystery. Since the outer man is very limited in material, the desire on the part of Hemingway and his imitators to be more and more "realistic" has been very great. Otherwise, they would have little to write about. Which is why

one group has gone to the honky-tonks and to the human automatons who inhabit them in search of copy. And that is why another group has gone to the bedrooms of nymphomaniacs and their cretin lovers for plots for their "terrific" books.

But Hemingway has taken the ultimate step, in the pursuit of his own method, in *Across the River*. With it he has reached the dead end of his brand of realism. *Across the River* is the story of the 50-year-old Colonel Richard Cantwell, U.S.A., and his week-end assignation with his nineteen-year-old Italian mistress, Countess Renata. The colonel, in the words of his orderly, is a "mean son of a bitch, and he can be so God-damn nice." He calls people he doesn't like, including d'Annunzio, "jerks," and his other frequent comment on things and people is *merde*, or its English equivalent. He "only loved people . . . who had fought or been mutilated":

Other people were fine and you liked them and were good friends; but you only felt true tenderness and love for those who had been there and had received the castigation that everyone receives who goes there long enough.

So I'm a sucker for crips, he thought. . . . And any son of a bitch who has been hit solidly, as every man will be if he stays, then I love him.

The colonel would "rather not love any one." He'd "rather have fun. And fun, his good side said to him, you have no fun when you do not love." He loves "more than any son of the great bitch alive." The object of his love comes upon the scene "shining in her youth and tall, striding beauty, and the carelessness the wind had made of her hair. She had pale, almost olive colored skin, a profile that could break your, or any one else's heart, and her dark hair, of an alive texture, hung down over her shoulders."

This motion-picture creature is greeted with these words by her gruff, bluff lover: "Hello, my great beauty."

And she replies, as befits a celluloid lady, "Oh, oh hello. I thought I would miss you. I am so sorry to be late."

Her voice, of course, "was low and delicate."

Then they consume mountains of drinks and every few pages they reveal their innermost selves to each other with these illuminating words:

"Say once again that you love me."

"I love you and I love you and I love you."

They have a violent and prolonged love scene that Hemingway describes in great physiological detail. It is probably the "frankest" such scene in all American literature, and also one

of the most boring. What Catherine refers to in *A Farewell to Arms* as "doing our things" is here spelled out across dozens of pages. The pointless vulgarity of it all is impossible to put into words. Occasionally, like many Hemingway women, Renata becomes girlishly philosophical, branding love as "whatever that means," but most of the time she whips the colonel on to "love me true" at the same time pleading with him, "Please attack gently and with the same attack as before," a virile language that her soldier lover of 50 has taught her.

The colonel thinks he is being really kind to her, so much so, indeed, that he is disgusted. He says, "I'm so kind I stink." Another time he looks at Renata's picture and explodes, "You are so Goddamned beautiful you stink." Time and time again she kisses him "kind, and hard, and desperately." He ponders, like every Hemingway boy philosopher, "Very rough trade, . . . loving and

leaving. People can get hurt at it." He feels a piercing constriction in the region of his weak heart. He knows he is going to die. A bully to the end, he thinks:

What the hell do you have to worry about, boy? I hope you're not the type of jerk who worries about what happens to him when there's nothing to be done. Let's certainly hope not.

Then he collapses in death.

In short, Hemingway has written another pulp story about a man who is no more than a bag of mechanical impulses, and a woman who has no more reality than a talking doll. But this time he has dramatized his failure as he had never done before. He has revealed the shabbiness of his fictional philosophy by showing to what abysmally vulgar depths it inevitably pushes one. It seems incredible that the school he founded will be able to outlive the disgrace of *Across the River*.



THE CHECK LIST



PUBLIC AFFAIRS

VERDICT OF THREE DECADES, edited by Julien Steinberg. \$5.00. *Duell, Sloan & Pearce*. More than thirty men and women here present "the indictment of the democratic world against Soviet Communism," which shares "with Nazi totalitarianism the distinction of being the most reactionary system ever known to mankind." Among the contributors are Rosa Luxemburg, Karl Kautsky, Bertrand Russell, Emma Goldman, Max Eastman, André Gide, Arthur Koestler, David J. Dallin, Louis Budenz and Sidney Hook. Mr. Steinberg contributes an intelligent introduction. Altogether a very useful volume.

THE WORLD WE SAW, by Mary Bell Decker. \$3.00. *Richard R. Smith*. Mrs. Decker accompanied her husband, Dr. Clarence R. Decker, president of the University of Kansas City, on the Round the World tour of the first World Town Hall Seminar in 1949. Here, in the form of a diary, she records the numberless people, both big and little, whom she encountered. Her observations are shrewd, well-informed, and reveal a

mind of universal breadth and a heart that can sympathize with the trials of the great as well as with the agonies of the hopelessly downtrodden. There is not a trace of fluff or space-consuming chitchat in the entire volume. Indeed, the book is one of the most intelligent surveys of the contemporary world published this year, and it is written with vivacity, clarity and grace. Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt contributes a brief introduction, and George V. Denny, Jr., director of Town Hall of the Air, contributes a foreword.

THE LONELY CROWD, *A Study of the Changing American Character*, by David Riesman, in collaboration with Reuel Denney and Nathan Glazer. \$4.00. *Yale*. Here is an especially brilliant analysis of modern society, written by three social-psychologists who believe that today's citizen is becoming largely "other-directed" — he tunes in, as if by radar, on his social peers, to gain cues for "approval," and he no longer relies on inner morality or long-standing tradition. The authors carefully trace the "other-directed" citizen through work, politics, education, sex, leisure and consumption,

with special emphasis on his anxiety, false personalities, moral flux and persistent loneliness. They warn that "men are created different; they lose their social freedom and their individual autonomy in seeking to become like each other." A tremendously valuable and important book for the intelligent lay reader as well as the professional sociologist.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

TRUMAN, STALIN, AND PEACE, by Albert Z. Carr. \$2.75. *Doubleday*. Mr. Carr, a jack-of-all-diplomatic-trades, has written a short but provocative political guidebook in which Stalin is pictured as ruthless but realistic, while Truman is the shrewd little peace-minded President. Carr shows first how the United States backed out of an important postwar loan to Russia in 1944-45. He then maps out the cold war, which we won "in terms of dollars and armaments," but lost, ideologically, by consistently backing *status quo* governments. In China, he believes "the political cart [was] put before the economic horse," while in Germany we let the cartels win the cold war. His program for peace — Point Four and genuine democracy abroad, with a stable economy at home — seems sound and intelligent.

THE ROAD TO PEARL HARBOR, by Herbert Feis. \$5.00. *Princeton*. A former adviser on international economic affairs in the State department, Mr. Feis has had access to records and information not available to others, and here he

presents what is probably the most comprehensive study, within one volume, of American-Japanese relations in the years 1937-1941. He does not write very well, but so engrossing is his material that not only specialists but also many general readers will find his work extremely interesting.

BIOGRAPHY

THE STORY OF ERNIE PYLE, by Lee G. Miller. \$3.95. *Viking*. Ernie Pyle was born in 1900 in Indiana and was killed by a Japanese bullet in Ie Shima in 1945, a week after the death of FDR. He was easily the greatest correspondent of the Second World War, and probably one of the greatest journalists of all time. He wrote about the people like one of them, not like a condescending philosopher or "knowledgeable" commentator. He was nearly always in poor health; he loved but one woman in his life, to the very end, but she was the cause of much of his misery. Apparently it was only near the end of his life that all his "superiors" fully appreciated his greatness. Mr. Miller loved him and understood his true nature; his biography will long endure as a model of its kind. He really "tells all," and Ernie probably would not have objected to a word in it.

HORACE GREELEY, by William Harlan Hale. \$4.00. *Harper*. The founder and first editor of the New York *Tribune* was an erratic, eccentric showman, "experimental, self-contradictory, explosive, irascible, and often downright

wrongheaded," as Mr. Hale says; but he was also probably, all in all, the most influential newspaper editor in all American journalistic history. Mr. Hale apparently has had access to some fresh material about his subject and the period he lived in; he has written a well-informed and sprightly book.

LITERATURE

AN EDITH WHARTON TREASURY, edited by Arthur Hobson Quinn. \$5.00. *Appleton-Century-Crofts*. Dr. Quinn reprints all of *The Age of Innocence*, three short novels, including *Bunner Sisters*, and eight of Mrs. Wharton's short stories, including "The Other Two," "Autre Temps," "Roman Fever," and "Xingu." Dr. Quinn, in his able introduction, maintains that Mrs. Wharton won a "secure place, not only in American fiction, but in that of the world." This may be an overenthusiastic appraisal, but the present volume makes it abundantly clear that Mrs. Wharton was a far more authentic artist than most fiction writers in America today.

THE YOUNG SHELLEY, *Genesis of a Radical*, by Kenneth Neill Cameron. \$6.00. *Macmillan*. This is a biography of Shelley's life between the years 1809-1813, with deliberate emphasis on his development from Deist to atheist, from Whig to Godwin radical. The author believes, moreover, that Shelley was the "most penetrative creative thinker" in the Godwin school. He examines in detail his early political poems and tracts, corrects several erroneous dates on his

poetry, publishes much new material, and provides an occasionally irksome running psychoanalysis of his motives. The book was awarded the first annual Modern Language Association prize for sound research in English literature.

AMERICA BEGINS, by Richard M. Dorson. \$4.50. *Pantheon*. An excellent anthology of seventeenth century American writings in eight different categories: voyages, natural wonders, remarkable providences, Indian captivities, Indian conceits and antics, Indian treaties, witchcrafts, and forest wars. Dr. Dorson, a frequent and valued contributor to the *MERCURY*, is a specialist in his field, and has unearthed much unfamiliar material. He supplies a long and learned introduction, and helpful explanatory notes. There are many good illustrations.

PERSPECTIVES OF CRITICISM, edited by Harry Levin. \$4.00. *Harvard*. Here are nine scholarly essays, all of them by Harvard professors, which lend some weight to the already solid entrenchment of the "new academism" in literary criticism. Alfred Schwarz sets the pace with a brilliant organization of Otto Ludwig's notes on Shakespearean tragedy, and John V. Kelleher neatly pins Matthew Arnold as an unwitting source of strength for the Celtic Revival. On a more ponderously pedantic level, Walter Jackson Bates laboriously pursues "Coleridge on Art," while editor Levin waxes semantic on Convention, the handmaiden between Art and Nature. Among the remaining contributors are Renato Poggioli, Jean Seznec, William

C. Greene, Perry Miller and Geoffrey Tillotson.

INVOLUNTARY WITNESS, by Joseph Warren Beach. \$1.50. *Macmillan*. This excellent collection of Mr. Beach's more recent poems is based largely on the theme of a passive, "involuntary witness" who is pulled and shaped by the forces of existence. Occasionally, in such poems as "Antipodes" and "Polarity," the poet actively confronts "the most foreign skies" and the "deeper plowing polar antagonisms" of love. All of his poems are written with the same jam and flow of tugging images — "the upward drag of the attic stairs"; "the downward plunge to the dark original" — but the saucy and wry portraits in the final sections give the collection a surprising roundness. Mr. Beach is a strong, true poet and well worth reading.

FICTION

THE PLENIPOTENTIARIES, by H. J. Kaplan. \$3.00. *Harper*. Mr. Kaplan has thinly disguised himself as the garrulous and gossipy Phineas Straus, an elderly writer of Paris letters who sees his fellow American expatriates as ironic exponents of the American Way. His two plenipotentiary friends, the artistic Tony and the political Patricia, are lovers who gain, respectively, wisdom and femininity after a crisscross love affair with a French artist and his wife. This flimsy plot is accompanied, fortunately, by a great deal of good talk from the narrator, Straus-Kaplan: e.g., "each American woman of a certain category must work

out the conditions of her womanhood alone. There is no inherited pattern"; and "Jews are outsiders in America, and yet they are peculiarly American . . . for what is more American than an outsider?" Mr. Kaplan's first novel wobbles along quite well on its wit and charm.

HIGH VALLEY, by Charmian Clift and George Johnston. \$3.00. *Bobbs-Merrill*. This book, which won first prize in the Sydney (Australia) *Morning Herald* novel competition, is an obvious take-off on *Lost Horizon*. In the Valley of the Dreaming Phoenix (Shangri-la) the short glorious summers make up for the long fierce winters. The Chinese boy Salom (Robert Conway), who doesn't belong anywhere because he was raised by Tibetans in Tibet, makes the four-month trip to the valley on a hot tip from an old Chinese peddler. He herds sheep there for the headman, falls in love with his daughter Veshti ("a mouth as rich and red as a peony," "firm, pointed breasts," "the eyes of a gazelle"), and is forced to flee with her when he kills a villainous priest. Next summer, as their naked bodies are dug up out of the snow, the high lama remarks, "They were the *undefeated*." Oddly enough, it all makes for pleasant romantic reading.

HEAVY HANGS THE GOLDEN GRAIN, by Seumas MacManus. \$3.00. *Macmillan*. A rich collection of Irish folklore, from the pen of Seumas MacManus, a fine *shanachie* (story-teller) with a genuine gift for poetic whimsy. His tales, poems and adages are all about

the doings of Raftery, the fiddler; Dark Patrick; the wise wife of Gob-an-Saor; the Love-Talker; the leprechauns; and other old favorites. While spinning an old legend, MacManus handles his "golden grain" with charm. Unfortunately, he also pads it out with a good deal of chaff — bits of pointless legends, weak ballads, and his own clumsy transitional quips, which sound too much like the work of a man who specializes in being Irish.

MISCELLANEOUS

THE SMITHSONIAN, *America's Treasure House*, by Webster Prentiss True. \$3.50. *Sheridan*. Mr. True, with the aid of 64 photographs and a discursive text, takes the reader on a pleasant tour of the ten bureaus which comprise the fabulous Smithsonian Institution. He says it is "primarily a research organization," but proudly cites its collection of 30 million objects, ranging from dinosaurs and shrunken heads to crystal balls and "Botticelli's." If a man "looked at one specimen every minute, eight hours every day, it would take him 170 years to finish the job," he tells us. He also points out that the institute sends expeditions to all corners of the earth, publishes valuable data, runs the Canal Zone Biological Area and studies the sun. A valuable text for all past and future visitors.

HOW TO BUILD A BETTER VOCABULARY, by Maxwell Nurnberg and W. T. Rhodes. \$2.95. *Prentice-Hall*. The purpose of this book is "not only to help you add new words to your vocab-

ulary but to bring into sharp and permanent focus those words that are now on the blurred fringe of your mind." Messrs. Nurnberg and Rhodes carry out this purpose most admirably. Widely read in current literature and journalism, and possessed of lively minds and facility with the English language, they perform virtual magic with several hundreds of words and phrases, making them hop, skip and jump across the page; and if they do not impress these words and phrases permanently upon the readers' minds, it is not their fault. There are many excellent illustrative quotations and line-cuts.

A SECOND TREASURY OF THE FAMILIAR, edited by Ralph L. Woods. \$5.00. *Macmillan*. There are nearly 700 pages of favorite quotations here, from the writings of old and new writers — and from that most prolific writer of all, Anonymous. Shakespeare, Shelley, and Poe are represented, but so are Edgar Guest, F.P.A., and Ernie Pyle. Really first-rate bed-time reading. There is an index of titles and authors.

GEORGIAN LOVE SONGS, edited by John Hadfield. \$7.50. *Cupid Press & the British Book Centre*. There are 100 excellent lyrics here, most of them by minor poets and some anonymous, written between 1714 and 1780. Mr. Hadfield has earned the gratitude of all lovers of poetry by unearthing so many obscure lyrics of such high quality. His brief introduction is admirable. The decorations by Rex Whistler are superb, as is the general bookmanship.

THE OPEN FORUM



THE DEBATE ON NATURAL HYGIENE

SIR: I would appreciate it if Dr. Wassersug halted long enough in his headlong exhibition of medical dogmatism [see "The Case Against Natural Hygiene" in the September *MERCURY*] to explain the following flaws in the citadel of health which he has erected on the rickety foundation of drug medication: Why, in view of the vaunted progress of medical science which he proclaims ever and anon, should there exist today a condition wherein over 65 per cent of draftees are rejected for military service for physical disabilities, many of which take the form of ailments usually ascribed to those in the middle-age and even old-age brackets? . . . The medical profession might [very well] be accused of failing to uphold our democratic way of life in not addressing themselves to the social task of fitting our citizens to fulfill their military duties. . . .

Perhaps, Dr. Wassersug can also . . . explain the constantly rising incidence of chronic diseases, which today number among their current victims over 23 million Americans, according to the most reliable life insurance statistics. . . .

The miracle drugs which Dr. Wassersug endorses and employs so liberally in his practice are discovered annually; then, after a period of publicity-pressure, they make way for other drug-manufacturers' money-makers, and literally tread on each others' heels on their way to oblivion, leaving in their tracks still more sufferers from these diseases, of which cancer and heart disease are in the vanguard. . . .

Of course, we deny unequivocally the claims which Dr. Wassersug advances that the medical profession is responsible for increased longevity, despite the fact that these added years in nearly all instances mean just a prolonged period of suffering for these sexagenarians and septuagenarians, who become habitués of doctors' offices or live for the most part in the medicine chest. . . . Those of us who are tenement-bred remember, for instance, the high incidence of tuberculosis, which was only one of the penalties of residing in those airless, sun-hidden cubicles. Such men as Jacob A. Riis, Jane Addams and other social-minded settlement workers, receiving the full

coöperation of labor leaders and union workers, forced through the legislation which improved the living conditions and raised the level of sanitation in these disease-breeding tenements. Rarely if ever were these conditions the personal concern of the medical profession, which was too busy in those days, pursuing fees in and out of these patient-laden tenements, to stop and join the attack on the landlordism which thrived on these incubators of disease, aided and abetted by political graft. . . .

And does Dr. Wassersug see fit to overlook the constructive contributions made by the group of physical culturists and natural hygienists headed by Bernarr Macfadden in waging unrelenting campaigns for fresh air, open windows, more sun and exercise, whole wheat bread, and better diets including more fruits and vegetables? That campaign started in the 1890's, long before the average doctor gave these matters any thought; for the most part, they were not only uncoöperative but in many cases antagonistic to the program.

Does he forget the heartbreaking fight that Dr. Harvey W. Wiley put up for the food-and-drugs act about 45 years ago? Why, pray, did not the medical profession at that time show their true purposes as "saviors of humanity" by throwing their full and uncompromising support behind Dr. Wiley and his efforts? They might have bestowed overnight success on this campaign. Instead, if Dr. Wassersug is courageous enough to examine the record, he might find to his dismay that many doctors were arrayed against Dr. Wiley and in support

of the nefarious plans of the meat-and-food trust. . . . It took Upton Sinclair and his book *The Jungle* to reveal the rottenness of the meat packers. It remained for Alfred W. McCann to enlighten the public on the health-destroying properties of white bread and the health-giving qualities of whole wheat bread. Please note that neither of these names has an M.D. after it.

Today the medical profession can be comfortably counted on to endorse products and habits which go counter to basic health principles, such as cigarette smoking. In the case of tobacco use, I presume Dr. Wassersug has read of the recent clinical reports which attribute the growing incidence of lip, tongue, lung and larynx cancer directly to smoking. One of these experimenting doctors actually gave up cigarettes as a result of his clinical conclusions! Perhaps this doctor may have been one of the 11,000 whom the manufacturers of one brand of cigarettes feature in their advertisements as endorsing their product to be least harmful. It is a well-known fact that the *Journal of the American Medical Association* accepts full page advertisements from these "coffin-nail" producers at generous rates. Undoubtedly, Dr. Wassersug has conned thoroughly the Raymond Pearl report on the deleterious effects of smoking on longevity. The Pearl conclusion, mathematically arrived at, indicates a loss of an average of 10 years from the smoker's life span. Now, if Dr. Wassersug can prevail upon his associates to condemn smoking, they could stick another feather in their collective cap and extend the longevity of Americans

to the extent of another decade. . . .

As to the virtues of vaccines, Dr. Wassersug fails to mention the salient fact that there are two schools of medical thought on the subject of their fundamental values. He may be unaware of the fact that in such countries as Holland, England, Denmark, Norway and Sweden, vaccination is optional.

We hold no brief for the bills now before Congress providing medical care on a more or less socialized basis. But the unalterable and vigorous opposition of the American Medical Association, directed by high-pressure publicists who have launched a multi-million dollar campaign to defeat these bills, is a revealing commentary on the anti-social attitude of the medical profession, which, we can see, is at all times more concerned with the dollar than the humanities. It is willing to protect the high-fee incomes of the upper-bracket physicians at all costs. . . .

In its criticisms of the British Health plan the AMA claims that the transfer of dental surgeons into the health service causes irreparable damage to the teeth of hundreds of thousands of school children. It knows full well the fallacy of this complaint. It must appreciate the financial condition which prevented these children from ever obtaining dental service in the first place; the dental damage would have resulted in any event, as it is occurring among the children of this country, not by virtue of an overburdened dental service, but because of the widespread use of refined foods, excessive candy eating, cake consumption and soft drinks, starting from infancy. When will

doctors be honest with themselves and the American public and attack a condition at its roots rather than wait for it to bloom forth in fullest corruption?

SYMON GOULD

New York City

SIR: According to Dr. Wassersug, natural hygienists are a very backward lot. We do not accept the theories and practices of medicine and we have not caught up with all the marvelous advances made by medical science. We reject the absurd germ theory of disease and refuse serum and vaccinal indulgences. This seems to be our worst sin.

Now, a science that has progressed so far that it can revert to animistic thinking and talk of the physiological behavior of lifeless, inert substances does not command intelligent attention. Only living structures are capable of physiological behavior. Dead structure cannot behave physiologically, nor can unorganized substances.

It is true that there has been a marked increase in the average life-span during the past hundred years, but this has taken place during the time that natural hygiene was promulgated and practiced, and the increase has been in precisely the ratio to which natural hygiene has been adopted. It is certainly not true that this increase of life has been due to the fact that physicians ceased to rely on fresh air, pure water and good food, for they never relied on these, but upon their heroic doses of the deadliest poisons of all the kingdoms of nature. Today they are not curing more than their predecessors, they are only killing fewer with their smaller

and less frequent doses. . . . If we are satisfied to spend our lives in the mere palliation of symptoms, then we shall be satisfied with "medical progress." If, on the other hand, we desire to remove causes and restore health, we will not be satisfied with the great mass of spectacular palliatives that medicine has developed. . . .

Dr. Wassersug aims his big gun in the wrong direction when he labors long and hard to prove that his profession uses natural things in the treatment of disease. I grant that opium, quinine, etc., are natural; but, then, so is an earthquake, a stroke of lightning and a rattlesnake bite. Natural hygienists employ substances and influences that have a normal relation to the body. Whatever the body appropriates and makes use of in a state of health is hygienic; whatever it rejects and makes no use of in a state of health is not hygienic. His drugs are not supposed to be useful in a state of health. They cannot be used in a state of disease.

This is not to deny that they cannot be used to palliate symptoms, and this is all that they are ever used for. None of them can restore health. None of them can remove the causes of disease. Assuming that he does know of a few diseases that are caused by microbes, he cannot possibly give enough of any of his poisons to kill all of the germs in the patient without killing the patient first. Indeed, this is precisely what is often done by such methods.

Natural hygienists do not have to choose between growing the cinchona tree or other drug-yielding plants in their yards and buying the "improved"

products of the pharmaceutical chemist. They reject both of these types of substances as having no normal relation to the living organism. A poison is no less poisonous because it is a plant alkaloid. Natural hygienists employ food plants, not poisonous plants. They are not herbalists or phytotherapists.

A profession that cannot remedy a common cold, is unable to do more than palliate simple constipation, and is powerless to remedy uncomplicated indigestion or to remedy acne, is in no position to boast of its progress. Its belief in disease and cures and its constant search for cures reveal that it is still in the stage of *shamanism*. It has not even caught up with the horse and buggy. . . .

Dr. Clendening refers to rest as a therapeutic rather than as a hygienic measure. . . . Clendening was blissfully unaware of the fact that a drugged patient cannot rest. The languor and lassitude of the man who wakes up from a "sleep" induced by a hypnotic or a soporific reveals that even he has not rested. The medical substitute for rest may produce all of the evils that Dr. Wassersug describes, but these do not develop in true rest.

The medical profession does not know the essential nature of disease and natural hygienists insist that they do know. Let Dr. Wassersug show that we are wrong and not dismiss our definition of disease with the dogmatic assertion that it is an unfounded assumption!

He devotes much of his space to a consideration of fasting and contends that his profession, which does not em-

ploy it (he says it once did — I wonder when), knows more about fasting than those of us who do use it. He boasts too much. In more than 32 years of practice I have conducted well over 25,000 fasts, the longest of these running 90 days. In all of this time I have never had a death in a case of acute disease. These cases include such diseases as typhoid, smallpox, diphtheria, poliomyelitis, infant diarrhea, scarlet fever, etc. Is there a physician in the land who can match that record with his wonder drugs? Nor do my cases of typhoid and pneumonia last as long as do similar cases under medical care. Another important feature of hygienic care of such cases is that there are never any complications nor relapses.

If the medical profession was as successful in its care of the sick as Wassersug suggests, I would have starved to death long ago. During the 21 years in which my health school has been in existence we have handled thousands of chronic cases of all types (they have come here from all parts of the world), and a good 95 per cent of them have had from two to twenty or more years of medical care before coming here. One of these had 28 operations before he came here for treatment. If natural hygiene should enable only 10 per cent of such patients to get well, it would be of inestimable value. But when it enables most of them to recover, its superiority over anything the medical profession ever dreamed of is fully demonstrated. Do I reject investigation and scientific scrutiny? No, on the contrary, I welcome it. Medical men who send members of their families to me for care, or who

come themselves, will laugh at Dr. Wassersug's reply.

I have cared for large numbers of cases of gastric and duodenal ulcers with fasting and I have had bleeding develop in but one case. I have yet to have a case fail to recover. When I say that the ulcer patient became comfortable after three days of fasting, I tell what I have observed in many cases, with but one exception. The difference between the hygienic plan of care and the medical plan is that our patients get well in a few weeks and remain well, while medically treated cases suffer for long periods, have repeated recurrences, and are then operated on or have their ulcer evolve into cancer.

We do not deny that deaths from diabetic coma have been greatly reduced, but I would call attention to the fact that deaths from insulin coma are not so rare, while the death rate in diabetes keeps climbing year after year. The diabetic carries his hypodermic syringe with him everywhere he goes and depends on this palliative, while the hygienically-cared-for diabetic does not become an insulin addict. Dr. Wassersug is overfond of the spectacular palliation that his profession can provide, but we in the hygienic school are interested in restoring health. Manufacturers of crutches may describe the beauties of their crutches in glowing terms, but I would much rather have a good pair of legs.

If fluids and salts can save the babies and children suffering with diarrhea, why don't they do it? Why is the death rate so high nation-wide? Why, on the

other hand, do all cases recover when fasted? Is it not probable that the deficiency of fluids and salts seen in diarrhea is the result of the losses occasioned by the diarrheas, rather than the cause of the diarrhea?

HERBERT M. SHELTON, D.P., N.D.

San Antonio, Tex.

SIR: The "worst sin" of natural hygiene [see "The Case for Natural Hygiene" in the September *MERCURY*] is not its rejection of the germ theory of disease but that it starts with unproved contentions regarding the functioning of the human body and then, on these unproved contentions, builds a vast super-structure that is supposed to be a complete guide in maintaining health and overcoming disease. It is as if a person constructed a musical instrument out of a cigar box, a broom handle and a piece of wire and then contended that by plucking this instrument, he could get all the full tones of a symphony orchestra. Natural hygienists have oversimplified both the problems of disease and the remedies.

As for the germ theory of disease, it can be stated briefly as follows: In the environment in which man is forced to work and live there are hostile agencies of various sorts. Some of these are physical as, for example, strong sunlight or drowning. Other hostile agents are animate; their size ranges from the largest beasts to the mosquito, and so on down the biological scale to microscopic parasites. Simply because germs are not seen by the naked eye, their effect is no less deadly. Some, like those commonly found in the digestive tract, are essential

to normal digestion and health, but others are damaging because of their ability to destroy tissues or because they secrete deadly poisons into the human system. Botulism is an example of a disease accompanied by a severe toxin.

The human body does not stand idly by when life and health are threatened. We slap at mosquitoes. We trap predatory animals, and our tissues themselves fight against invading germs. As in any battle, the outcome depends on the forces that can be mustered by the invader and the invaded. In some cases the human body musters its resources, fights off the germs and spontaneously recovers from the disease. This is the type of case for which the natural hygienist pats himself on the back as having restored to health. There are other infections, however, such as septicemia or subacute bacterial endocarditis, in which the body is overwhelmed by the invading force. These are the patients who will die. As a matter of fact, until the advent of penicillin, these patients did die.

In the combat between the germs and the human organism, there are several ways in which victory can be achieved. Agents can be administered to the patient to kill the germs. Other agents, such as antitoxins and serums, can be given to increase the resistance of the host. And, best of all, if it can be predicted that the patient will become exposed to germs, such as a child is readily exposed to whooping cough, the resistance of the body can be enhanced by the administration of various vaccines. These facts have been demonstrated in many ways and the natural hygienists can be

referred to any of the textbooks on physiology and bacteriology. *To deny these facts in this year of 1950 would be as irrational as maintaining that the earth were flat simply because it looked flat to human vision.*

There are other ailments which cannot be treated at present by any known medical program and depend on surgical correction. For example, the child with congenital heart disease who is blue and short of breath may be restored to health by any one of several complicated surgical procedures. In this connection, it must be noted, however, that the advances in surgery have depended not only on the acquisition of surgical skill but on the knowledge of asepsis (the germ theory again) and on anesthesia (a wholly unnatural method of inducing sleep).

The natural hygienists cannot cope with a problem of this type. Dr. Shelton is amusing. Any one of us would prefer "a good pair of legs" to the most beautiful crutches, but that is not the problem. The physician has to treat the person who has lost his legs. The natural hygienist offers neither crutches nor legs.

The relationship between tobacco and American medicine is sharply twisted by Gould to prove a point. Doctors from time to time have been asked to carry out tests on various tobacco products on animals and on human beings to determine which of several products are least injurious on the basis of laboratory or clinical examination. The results of the findings are published in medical journals and are intended simply as a guide for the physician. This material, after it is

published, is in the public domain and it can be used by anyone who is interested either for additional scientific investigation or in other ways, including advertising. This, however, does not constitute an endorsement by the researchers or by the medical profession. As scientists, it is their job to separate truth from falsehood, but the doctor has no control over how his results will be used.

It is noteworthy, further, that in a most recent letter (September 2, 1950) in the *American Medical Association Journal*, Dr. Austin V. Deibert, Chief of the Cancer Control Branch of the Natural Cancer Institute, states: "The actual epidemiologic and experimental evidence linking lung cancer to exposure to tar dust or fumes (the probable cancerigenic agent in tobacco tar) leaves much to be desired." "In fact," he adds, "even with the use of highly carcinogenic coal tar introduced by various routes into the trachea or lung of experimental animals it has been difficult or impossible to cause cancer of the lung. That tobacco tar is a much weaker cancerigenic agent than coal tar is a well demonstrated fact."

As one reads "The Case For Natural Hygiene" one is impressed by the fact that it has very little on which to build its *own* case. It thrives mostly by berating the medical profession and it culls its patients from the gullible, the restless and the eternally dissatisfied. Dr. Shelton need not worry. He will not "starve to death" as long as the ignorant, the misguided and the bewildered are looking for "cures."

JOSEPH D. WASSERSUG, M.D.
Quincy, Mass.

THE LITERARY BAZAAR

FIRST EDITIONS • RARE BOOKS
AUTOGRAPHS • LITERARY SERVICES

PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

THE OLDEST WRITERS' SERVICE. Literary Agent, established 25 years. Manuscripts criticised, revised, typed, marketed. Special attention to Book manuscripts, Poetry. Catalogue on request.

AGNES M. REEVE Dept. M, Franklin, Ohio

MANUSCRIPTS APPRAISED FOR PUBLICATION. Salable material marketed. Specific advice, guidance for revision or publication. Highly recommended. Write before sending manuscripts. **PUBLISHERS' AGENCY**, 31-35 W. 42nd St., New York 18. N. Y.

OUT-OF-PRINT

WE SPECIALIZE and are successful in finding promptly the "Out-of-Print" or "Hard-to-Find" books which you particularly desire. Please write us stating "Wants." No obligation.

THE SEVEN BOOK-HUNTERS
Station O, Box 22 New York 11, N. Y.

GENERAL

ATHEIST BOOKS. 32-page catalogue free. Truth Seeker Co., 38 Park Row, New York 8, N. Y.

Convince your friends that **RELIGION IS A DELUSION.** Positive proof in the condensed booklet **SUPERIOR MEN**

By JAMES HERVEY JOHNSON, 50¢, postpaid, stamps or coin to "Books", Box 2832, San Diego 12, Calif.

COIN COLLECTORS—Read "The Numismatist." Published monthly. News, illustrated feature articles on coins and medals. Sample copy 50¢. American Numismatic Association. P.O. Box 2155 Wichita, Kansas.

Bound Volumes of **THE AMERICAN MERCURY** from January, 1926 to September, 1936 (large size, four issues to a volume) \$3.00 each (value \$4.50). Bound volumes from October, 1936 to June, 1943 (digest size, six issues to a volume) \$2.00 (value \$3.50). Most of these magazines are bound in buckram, and some have imported Batik papers added on the sides. Send order and remittance to Jean Jay, **THE AMERICAN MERCURY**, 570 Lexington Avenue, New York 22.

638

SIR: In your September CHECK LIST, one of your reviewers, criticizing my *Loud Literary Lamas of New York* which stands or falls on its facts, ignored my facts altogether but attacked me in a somewhat left-handed shrewish way by saying I had spent my life trying to be recognized by such great men as himself. In doing this he lied deliberately, because he lacked the wit to attack me entertainingly, and the courage to tackle my facts. For 30 years I have written for large audiences and never once wrote a book to charm the exotic "Few."

JACK WOODFORD

Hollywood, Calif.

STATEMENT OF THE OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, AND CIRCULATION REQUIRED BY THE ACT OF CONGRESS OF AUGUST 24, 1912, AS AMENDED BY THE ACTS OF MARCH 3, 1933, AND JULY 2, 1946 (Title 39, United States Code, Section 233)

of *The American Mercury*, published monthly at Concord, N. H., for October 1, 1950.

1. The names and addresses of the publisher, editor, managing editor, and business managers are: *Publisher and Editor*, Lawrence E. Spivak, 570 Lexington Ave., New York 22, N. Y.; *Managing Editor*, Charles Angoff, 570 Lexington Ave., New York 22, N. Y.; *General Manager*, Joseph W. Ferman, 570 Lexington Ave., New York 22, N. Y.

2. The owners are: Mercury Publications, Inc., 570 Lexington Ave., New York 22, N. Y.; Lawrence E. Spivak, 570 Lexington Ave., New York 22, N. Y.; Joseph W. Ferman, 570 Lexington Ave., New York 22, N. Y.

3. The known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders owning or holding 1 percent or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages, or other securities are: None.

4. Paragraphs 2 and 3 include, in cases where the stockholder or security holder appears upon the books of the company as trustee or in any other fiduciary relation, the name of the person or corporation for whom such trustee is acting; also the statements in the two paragraphs show the affiant's full knowledge and belief as to the circumstances and conditions under which stockholders and security holders who do not appear upon the books of the company as trustees, hold stock and securities in a capacity other than that of bona fide owner.

Joseph W. Ferman, *General Manager*

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 28th day of September, 1950.

[Seal] Ethel S. Aldinger, *Notary Public*
(My commission expires March 30, 1952.)

Fantasy and Science Fiction

MAKES AN EXCITING
Christmas Gift!

Here are the best stories old and new of the weird, the awful, the delightfully unbelievable. Give FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION to friends who enjoy reading "the impossible made convincing." Now published six times a year, it makes a distinctive gift... a reminder of your thoughtfulness that will arrive regularly throughout the year.

FOR AS
LITTLE AS
\$1.50



**MAIL THIS
COUPON
TODAY!**

SPECIAL GIFT RATES:

- 1 subscription...\$2.00 • 2 subscriptions...\$3.50
3 subscriptions.....\$5.00
Each additional subscription \$1.50

Your own subscription (new or extension) may be included

FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION, 570 Lexington Avenue, New York 22, N. Y.

Please enter the following gift subscriptions at the special rates shown above:

1. Name.....
Address.....
City.....
Zone..... State.....
Gift card to read: From.....

2. Name.....
Address.....
City.....
Zone..... State.....
Gift card to read: From.....

3. Name.....
Address.....
City.....
Zone..... State.....
Gift card to read: From.....

4. Name.....
Address.....
City.....
Zone..... State.....
Gift card to read: From.....

MY NAME.....

Address..... **City & Zone**..... **State**.....

Please Check: Include my own subscription — ☐ New ☐ Extension ☐ Do not

☐ I enclose \$.....

☐ Bill me after Christmas

AM-11

Detective : *The Magazine of TRUE CRIME stories*

The annals of crime have fascinated mankind from time immemorial. Many of the crude drawings scratched on clay tablets by our prehistoric ancestors were the retelling of stories of violence. And the Bible contains what is perhaps the first written report of a murder—the story of how Cain killed Abel.

It is surprising, in view of the amount of time and space devoted to true crime, that seldom has good crime reporting been coupled with an effective literary style. And even more surprising that there has never been a magazine devoted exclusively to the publication of true crime stories distinguished both for the quality of selection and the quality of writing.

To meet the needs of the discriminating adult reader who demands that his reporting be direct, clear and above all, illuminating, we present **Detective: The Magazine of True Crime Stories**. Each issue contains a selection of the best true crime stories, new and old, chosen for their accuracy, restraint and well-rounded presentation. These include cases written especially for us, as well as reprints of old cases not familiar to the general public. All are exceptional, distinguished for their variety, their insight and their intelligent, literate approach. We think you'll enjoy the rewarding experience of reading **Detective: The Magazine of True Crime Stories**.

Detective: The Magazine of True Crime Stories

A Mercury Publication

570 Lexington Avenue, New York 22, N. Y.

Please enter my subscription for **Detective: The Magazine of True Crime Stories** for the next 12 issues. I enclose \$4.00 in full payment.

Name.....

Address.....

City.....Zone.....State.....

MERCURY PUBLICATIONS

invite you to settle down to some fast-paced, spine-tingling reading. Every one of the imprints and titles below is warranted to keep you at the edge of your chair from beginning to end. They are presented by the publishers of famed ELLERY QUEEN'S MYSTERY MAGAZINE.



A NEW ONE ON THE 1ST OF EVERY MONTH

Now on Sale: EDWARD A. RONNS'S

TERROR IN THE TOWN

They called Manuel the killer. At the beginning Verity agreed, for Manuel's mind was twisted and the three spinsters had been strangled with insane rage. But while men hunted Manuel, Verity wondered why a maniac would ransack the town's libraries. There were other ugly patterns too—the legend of treasure on the old whaling ship, and the rumors of corruption in the private lives of the town's prominent citizens. But Verity didn't really feel the terror in the town until one night she heard strangely dragging footsteps coming at her through the blackness. . . . 35¢ at your newsstand



A NEW ONE ON THE 20TH OF ALTERNATE MONTHS

Now on Sale: DASHIELL HAMMETT'S

THE CREEPING SIAMESE

He's a drab looking little guy with a comfortable paunch, but don't ever try to land a fist on him if you want to wake up before tomorrow. Sure, he admits to forty, but in those forty years he's mopped up Frisco with more tough guys than you want to think about. For he's the Continental Op and there isn't a rogues' gallery in the country that doesn't show his mark. We are proud to bring you this new collection featuring three stories of the Op, plus three newly discovered tough tales by the one and only Dashell Hammett. . . . 35¢ at your newsstand

MORE THAN 55 MILLION BOOKS AND MAGAZINES SOLD TO ENTHUSIASTIC READERS



A NEW ONE ON THE 15TH OF EVERY MONTH

Now on Sale: BART SPICER'S

THE DARK LIGHT

"General" Jackson didn't look to Carney Wilde like he could afford a detective, but he had the kind of face you want to help. So Wilde agreed to help Jackson find the missing preacher, Matthew Kimball, whose trail led from the waterfront mission to the exclusive suburb where rich Mrs. Prentice had built a church for Kimball. And Carney Wilde began to be puzzled, for he soon found that only "General" Jackson believed in Kimball. And because he believed, the "General" was found crumpled on the floor of the mission, and the blood he lay in was his own. 35¢ at your newsstand



A BIMONTHLY

Here are outstanding stories, new and old, of the weird, the awful, the delightfully unbelievable. FANTASY is co-edited by famed author-editors Anthony Boucher and J. Francis McComas. In the current issue:

Take Two Quiggies. . . . KRIS NEVILLE
Process. . . . A. E. VAN VOGT
Dianetics: a review. . . . C. DALY KING, PH.D.
Another Chance for Casey. . . . LARRY SIEGEL
The Angel with Purple Hair. . . . HERB PAUL
The Well-Oiled Machine. . . . H. B. FYFE

Plus many more by other masters of the craft. 35¢ at your newsstand. By subscription \$4 for 12 issues. FANTASY: 570 Lexington Ave., New York 22, N. Y.